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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-94-239 *13 December 1994*

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Peres, 'Arafat Announce 'No Crisis' in Talks

TA1312061794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 13 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The attorney general has ordered the finance minister to withhold the transfer of all Israeli funds to the Palestinian Authority until the law on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho agreement is enacted. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the issue was brought to the attention of the prime minister, who is currently in Japan, because considerable sums of money are involved and it is feared that the delay might affect the continuation of the negotiations with the Palestinians. Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres told Qol Yisra'el this morning that he had not yet heard about a delay in the transfer of funds to the Palestinians.

Last night in Stockholm, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and Yasir 'Arafat agreed to resume the talks on the implementation of the next stage of the Oslo accord in Cairo tomorrow. The talks will be conducted by four Israeli and four Palestinian representatives.

At the end of their meeting, Peres and 'Arafat announced that there was no crisis in the negotiations. They expressed their commitment to fully implement the agreement to hold elections in the territories and to redeploy the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] taking Israel's security needs into consideration. They also agreed to continue to hold informal high-level meetings according to the needs of the negotiations.

Israeli-Palestinian Center Holds Conference

TA1312105194 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 13 Dec 94 p 3

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Data banks and the free flow of information are two of the most essential aspects of environmental protection, agreed the participants at a conference on "Our Shared Environment," organized by the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information. The two-day conference, which started yesterday, is being held in Jerusalem.

"Data-sharing is not as easy as it sounds. It's not just a matter of declaring the will to share," warned Linda Whittaker of the Nature Reserves Authority. "It's also a matter of making sure the computers storing the information are compatible. Even within organizations this is sometimes problematic."

Jordanian and Palestinian participants also called for more data on subjects ranging from water quality to pesticides.

Conference director Robin Twite said Israel is at risk from a failure to enforce existing laws; overriding environmental legislation for perceived political imperatives; poor public standards of behavior; "and above all the rush, fueled by powerful vested interests, for more development, regardless of what this may do to the quality of life and whether it's sustainable in the long term."

"Palestinians are more concerned with their struggle for self- determination and attainment of greater rights to pursue the development course they choose than with contemplating 'better' or 'more appropriate' patterns of resource use, when they have little or no choice to begin with," said conference co-organizer Dr. Jad Ishaq, director of the Applied Research Center of Jerusalem and head of the Palestinian Environment Protection Authority.

Meanwhile, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians are establishing a joint Eco-Peace Task Force to monitor the effects of increased development on the environment, Alon Tal, director of the Israel Union for Environmental Defense (IUED), said yesterday. The idea was agreed upon at a meeting of environmental nongovernment organizations in Taba last week. A steering committee is expected to be established later this month.

The initiative follows the success of the Casablanca economic conference. "We need a common environmental response in the region to the increased pace of development expected from economic and commercial measures," said Gid'on Bromberg, the IUED's representative.

Tal said one requirement would be for an environment impact statement for every project. "Decisions such as enlarging al-'Aqabah Airport to serve Elat cannot be taken just based on economic considerations, without taking into account the environmental implications of laying down another airstrip in the middle of the 'En 'Avrona nature reserve," he said.

Israeli-PLO, PLO Leadership Disagreements Viewed

TA1212173794 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 12 Dec 94 p A3

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The PLO rejects the Israeli proposal for an interim arrangement and maintains that it contravenes the Declaration of Principles. This statement was made by senior PLO officials following the meeting between Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat in Oslo on the night of 10 December. The meeting was rife with disagreements, and spokesmen for both sides said no progress had been achieved. On 14 December, the Israeli and PLO delegations will meet in Cairo to continue discussions on the interim arrangement. In addition, high-level talks will be held. Peres and 'Arafat will convene in Sweden today, and Rabin and 'Arafat may meet next week.

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Sources in the Israeli entourage in Oslo say there are crucial disagreements among members of the Palestinian leadership, and these disagreements are responsible for the negative reaction to the Israeli proposal. As known, Israel has proposed two options: Either the elections are to be postponed for a year, or the Palestinians should waive the redeployment issue. According to Israeli sources, the leaders of both parties are deliberating the interim arrangement issue together, and two or three more weeks will be needed to draft an agreed-on version that will permit the sides to launch detailed negotiations on the arrangement. Israeli officials believe that there are disagreements mainly between Nabil Sha'th and Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'], two of 'Arafat's senior advisers. Abu-'Ala' has been presenting a more intransigent line designed to pressure Israel and to move 'Arafat to reject the Israeli demands. [passage omitted]

'Arafat's adviser Ahmad al-Tibi said that "Rabin's proposal for a phased solution is totally unacceptable. Every clause of the agreement should be upheld, including Clause 13 which deals with redeployment." Rabin said yesterday that the main problem from Israel's viewpoint is the rise in terrorist attacks perpetrated by radical Islamic organizations. "The citizens of Israel cannot tolerate the threat to their lives in Tel Aviv and 'Afula," the prime minister said. [passage omitted]

Israeli, Arab Electricity Experts Meet in al-'Aqabah

JN1212211394 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 12 Dec 94

[From the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Experts from Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, and Israel began a two-day meeting in al-'Aqabah to discuss the electricity interconnection projects between the four regions.

Plans for electricity interconnection, which have been prepared by Austrian and German consultants, are financed by the European Commission [EC]. Director of Jordan's Electricity Authority Muhammad Sa'id 'Arafah said the new project will not affect the electricity grid project between Jordan and Egypt or the one between Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Turkey.

Chief of the EC project division in Brussels (Christian Volkovski) expressed hope the experts' meeting will come up with plans to improve electric supplies in the four regions.

[Begin Volkovski recording] It's very opportune in time after peace agreements have been signed; and we hope that the experts will come to an understanding on what are priority projects for improving electricity supply in the region among the countries. And we very much think that electricity interconnection will further contribute to the peaceful relationship of the various parties. [end recording]

Al-Shar' on U.S. Interest in Lebanon, Syria Tracks

MM1212123094 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 12 Dec 94 p 2

[Interview with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' by unidentified correspondent in Casablanca; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What are the results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent tour of the region?

[Al-Shar'] When U.S. President Bill Clinton visited the region, he held talks with President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus. These talks were successful, as expressed by Clinton at a news conference. He pointed out that progress had been achieved. He also confirmed this position when he departed Damascus. But pro-Israeli media services and the Jewish lobby in the United States tried by all means to thwart the results of that summit, adopting a negative position on it to prevent the peace process from advancing. During Christopher's recent visit we sensed growing U.S. interest in advancing the results of the Damascus summit between Presidents al-Asad and Clinton and the peace process. There is now interest in U.S. sponsorship of and participation in the meetings scheduled to be held soon between the Syrian and Israeli sides in Washington to exchange views.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] At what level will that participation be?

[Al-Shar'] That issue has not been discussed yet. There are also delegation members. We had a delegation to the negotiations which comprised 14 members.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Is the objective to reactivate the Syrian-Israeli track, which has witnessed a disruption over the recent period?

[Al-Shar'] It is not a secret meeting, but, rather, U.S. participation between and with the two sides to solve some problems in order to open the door to the resumption of peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] What points will be discussed?

[Al-Shar'] The obstacles Israel is placing in the way of the peace process, especially on the Syrian track, will be discussed.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] And what are these obstacles?

[Al-Shar'] Israel does not want a full peace to be achieved in return for a full withdrawal [from the Golan Heights]. And it is trying to impose its hegemony on the Arab side—which we cannot accept.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Some people believe that the U.S. Administration wishes to reactivate the Lebanese track first in order to open the door to reactivating the Syrian track.

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[Al-Shar'] I do not believe that there is anyone currently proposing solving the Lebanese track problem first. On the contrary, even the U.S. side believes that solving, or opening the door to solving, the problem on the Syrian track would inevitably lead to solving the Lebanese track problem. Because the problem on the Lebanese track is much easier and does not need great efforts, since it does not have the complications present on the Syrian track.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] The Israelis say that they are willing to accept the idea of withdrawing gradually from the Golan in return for Syria's signing a peace treaty with Israel.

[Al-Shar'] If that is true, the Israelis—as we announced—must declare their willingness to withdraw fully in return for a full peace.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Says Jerusalem 'Capital of Both States'

BR1312112294 Rome L'ESPRESSO in Italian 16 Dec 94 pp 84-86

[Interview with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by Wlodek Goldkorn, Dina Nascetti in Gaza; date not given: "I Am a Nobel Prizewinner With No Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Goldkorn] Mr. Chairman, your option for dialogue between the PLO and Israeli was rewarded with a Nobel peace prize. But is the peace real?

['Arafat] I regret to say this, but there are many obstacles on the road to peace: The delays in the implementation of our agreements with the Israelis are very serious. But the main problem are the elections in Gaza and the West Bank. They should have taken place in July. We are now in December, and we still have not voted. You must understand that we need these elections—and right away.

[Goldkorn] Why?

['Arafat] Because elections mean democracy and stability.

[Goldkorn] What is the cause of the delay?

['Arafat] It is Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. According to the agreements reached, the precondition for holding free elections under the supervision of international observers is the Israeli troops' withdrawal from the populated areas. But Israel finds innumerable excuses for postponing its withdrawal. This delay will have very negative repercussions on the entire peace process.

[Goldkorn] Do you discuss this problem when you meet with Yitzhaq Rabin? What is the Israeli prime minister's reply?

['Arafat] We have decided to establish joint committees to discuss the unresolved problems. I regret to say that hitherto nothing specific has been achieved, though a special committee on electoral matters has also been established.

[Goldkorn] You have been living in Gaza for the past six months. What is your assessment?

['Arafat] To be honest, we face many difficulties and innumerable problems. The Israelis have destroyed all our infrastructures—drinking water, sewers, roads, homes, schools, hospitals, health facilities, electricity, radio, television, the port. The Israelis have even removed the railroad track. Do you understand what I am saying? They even lifted the rails from the track... When I met with the foreign ministers of the European countries in Brussels recently, I told them: Some of your countries had colonies, but when you left them you left the infrastructures. The Israelis, however, left nothing. So we have to start from scratch.

[Goldkorn] There was also a meeting of donor countries in Brussels: What did you obtain?

['Arafat] I spoke extremely frankly. The economic situation in the territories is very difficult. On the Gaza strip unemployment is as high as 58 percent: We are starving, and I am not exaggerating. This creates serious problems—not only economic, but political too. And Israel certainly is not helping us. Rabin has even decided to reduce the number of Palestinian workers permitted to cross the border with the Jewish state. In Brussels I received many promises in reply to my very clear arguments. All I can do is wait for these to be kept very soon.

[Goldkorn] What has Italy done?

['Arafat] Italy has always been our friend, and this applies both to its government and society, its parties and its trade unions. They have always supported us, and we expect support again at this very critical time for the Palestinian people.

[Goldkorn] Have you received concrete help from Italy, or only promises.

['Arafat] So far only promises.

[Goldkorn] When you talk about political problems, are you referring to the Hamas extremists?

['Arafat] No, not only them. But of course poverty and hunger are the culture medium for fanatics.

[Goldkorn] But Hamas is really fiercely opposed to you personally...

['Arafat] To me? That is not true. They are opposed to the peace process, and they receive their orders sand money from Iran and other countries.

[Goldkorn] Is it possible to negotiate with the Hamas people, or do they have to be combated militarily?

['Arafat] The Fatah Movement is conducting negotiations with Hamas. Just as Fatah negotiates with other

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opposition political parties. We are working in all directions. It is our duty to engage in dialogue with everyone. But on one condition: that they behave as a political party, in fact, and not as an armed gang of fanatics opposed to the peace process.

[Goldkorn] Is this the reply that you give to Rabin when the Israeli prime minister asks you to suppress Hamas by force of arms?

['Arafat] What is important for me is not Yitzhaq Rabin's opinion but to put an end to their activities. These fanatics must stop creating instability, stop jeopardizing my people's safety. I tell Rabin to concern himself with his own fanatics. Do I need to list all the massacres perpetrated by extremist settlers?

[Goldkorn] We have become accustomed to regarding the Palestinians as a nonconfessional people, but here in Gaza we have seen movie theaters and bars burned down by Islamic extremists...

['Arafat] I am a believer, but I advocate a nonconfessional society. And do not forget that many Palestinians are Christians. I repeat: The extremist fanatics exploit religion to hinder the peace process. And that is all I have to sat about Hamas.

[Goldkorn] Faysal al-Husayni, your government's official in charge of matters relating to Jerusalem, met with King Husayn in Amman...

['Arafat] Since negotiations are in progress with Jordan, it is not appropriate to discuss them publicly.

[Goldkorn] So let us talk about Jerusalem. Will it be the capital of the Palestinian state?

['Arafat] Definitely. The holy city—and I am talking precisely about this part of Jerusalem—has been under occupation since 1967. UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which are the foundation of the current peace process, demand an end to the occupation. And according to the Oslo and Washington agreements of 1993 between us and Israel, the Jerusalem question must be discussed as soon as possible, and no later than the start of the third year after the signing of those agreements. Furthermore, I would like to point out that Israel has pledged to guarantee freedom of worship to all religions and to protect the Christian and Muslim holy places until the establishment of a final settlement to the dispute over the city...

[Goldkorn] Recently Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said that from the religious viewpoint Jerusalem is an open city. Is this a stop forward?

['Arafat] The holy city is not at all open. Access to places of worship, churches and mosques, is sometimes impeded, using the pretext of security factors. Having said that, my reply to Peres is this: For me Jerusalem is not merely a religious problem, but primarily a political one. This city is the Palestinians' capital.

[Goldkorn] Israel says that Jerusalem is already the indivisible capital of the Jewish state...

['Arafat] But I have a solution—Jerusalem as the capital of both states, without a Berlin Wall to divide it.

[Goldkorn] The general opinion is that the peace process is making no progress because of Syria's reluctance to conclude an agreement with Israel.

['Arafat] It is only a matter of time. President Hafiz al-'Asad and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir will make peace. Believe me, it is only a matter of time.

[Goldkorn] Mr. President, let us return to the issue of the autonomous territories. You said that democracy is the precondition for peace. So why do you forbid the distribution in Gaza of some Palestinian newspapers from East Jerusalem?

['Arafat] That was an administrative decision, not a political one. Those newspapers did not request authorization for distribution here in Gaza.

[Goldkorn] But it does seem as though their seizure was due to entirely political reasons. In any case, the stop on distribution occurred when reports of the Hamas demonstration appeared.

['Arafat] I repeat: It is merely an administrative matter.

[Goldkorn] Who says so? Before the demonstrations against you those newspapers circulated freely...

['Arafat] Yes, they had my personal special permission on an entirely temporary basis, but now we want everything to be order, as befits a law-based state.

[Goldkorn] You have talked about the disastrous economic situation, the difficulties in relations with Israel, and the unkept promises. All this, while, thanks to the peace process begun by you, Israel has been accepted by most of the Arab world. Are you not bearing the whole cost of the peace process?

['Arafat] Unfortunately this is so. We Palestinians are the only ones bearing the cost of peace. The others, including some Arab countries, are reaping the benefits.

[Goldkorn] So what is your hope?

['Arafat] My people.

'Arafat Said Unhappy Over al-Husayni Amman Visit

JN1312113494 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 14 Dec 94 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed sources have told AL-BILAD that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat was dissatisfied with the outcome of Faysal al-Husayni's visit to Amman and the talks he had with Crown Prince Hasan on Jerusalem. The sources said that the paragraph in the statement which was transmitted by PETRA [the Jordanian News Agency], noting that the PLO agrees to

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keeping Jerusalem as a trust in Jordan's hands while it is under occupation was the direct reason for 'Arafat's dissatisfaction. 'Arafat blamed al-Husayni and said that before such statements are made, it must have been stressed that Jerusalem is an occupied Palestinian territory.

The sources explained that al-Husayni told 'Arafat that he was surprised by the language of the statement and said that the spirit of his talks with Prince Hasan fell in the direction of stressing the Palestinian nature of Jerusalem.

The sources say that this story made 'Arafat delay his visit to Amman. They said that 'Arafat plans to discuss this issue with His Majesty King Husayn during their expected meeting in Casablanca to understand Jordan's final position on Jerusalem, and that he will decide his position on visiting Jordan in the light of these talks.

Qaddumi Denies 'Differences' Between PLO, PA

MM1212132694 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 12 Dec 94 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Qaddumi Accuses Israel of Obstructing Declaration of Principles Implementation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Casablanca, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—PLO Political Department Head Faruq Qaddumi (Abu-al-Lutf) held Israel responsible for the obstacles obstructing the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli accord. He said that the Israeli Government is responsible for these obstacles. Qaddumi also said that "we must carefully define every step we take with Israel, because it is seeking to destroy the peace process." He added that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is not entitled to judge the Palestinian Authority's ability to organize elections in the self-rule areas. He said that Rabin is using this as an excuse to delay the Israeli Army's withdrawal from the West Bank. He [Rabin] is also using security as an excuse to avoid continuing to implement the Palestinian-Israeli accord.

He added that, if the elections are organized in the self-rule areas, all Palestinian citizens, including Hamas supporters, will be entitled to participate in them.

Asked about the financial aid to the Palestinian Authority [PA], the Palestinian official said that "there has been a slow response to the Palestinian Authority's demands." On Palestinian President's Yasir 'Arafat's upcoming visit to Jordan, Qaddumi denied that a date has been set for this visit, stressing that contacts are under way to arrange it.

Qaddumi denied the existence of differences between the PLO and the Palestinian Authority, saying that the PLO is the legislative and political authority for this Authority.

He added: "We are the central government and they are the local government."

'Abd-Rabbuh Denies Resigning From Ministry

TA1212182594 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 12 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Arna'ut]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem—Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, minister of culture and information in the Palestinian Authority, has denied a press report to the effect that he had submitted his resignation from the Information Ministry to President Yasir 'Arafat. He told AL-NAHAR: "This report is unfounded. It is empty talk." He added: "I am still minister of culture and information."

'Abd-Rabbuh said: "Yesterday's report and another one published by a newspaper last week are just the concoctions of journalists. I do not wish to discuss issues that are reported inaccurately by journalists."

Some journalists had concluded from statements made by 'Abd-Rabbuh in a seminar in Jerusalem that he had submitted his resignation, but 'Abd-Rabbuh denied this and said: "I did not submit my resignation."

A responsible source in the Ministry of Information emphasized that the National Authority has not made a decision to replace the Ministry of Information at this stage with equivalent bodies.

'Abd-Rabbuh Resigns Information Portfolio

JN1112152894 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 11 Dec 94 p 27

[Report by Samir Sa'd-al-Din in Jerusalem]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Palestinian sources in Gaza have said Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, leader of Fida [Palestinian Democratic Union Party], last week submitted his resignation from the information portfolio in the Palestine National Authority [PNA]. They also said President Yasir 'Arafat has accepted this resignation. 'Abd-Rabbuh, however, is still in charge of the culture portfolio.

The sources added that 'Abd-Rabbuh has assumed other important responsibilities, with respect to the negotiations with Israel, as a deputy to, and not as a substitute for, Mahmud 'Abbas, PLO Executive Committee member, who is abroad.

President 'Arafat has entrusted 'Abd-Rabbuh with this task as a result of FIDA's demand for a more important role in the PNA and in the negotiating process. FIDA party leaders held a series of meetings recently. They met with President 'Arafat to improve the status of the party and to secure more financial aid. This trend is led by 'Isam 'Abd-al-Latif, the party's deputy secretary general. Calls to withdraw from the PNA if the party is not given preferential status were made at these meetings.

The sources added that although President 'Arafat has assigned 'Abd-Rabbuh to a high-profile role in the PNA,

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'Arafat believes he must wait, as regards the distribution of political assignments, for the results of the dialogue with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the extensive contacts by some Fatah leaders and cadres with the Islamic Jihad Movement and other radical Palestinian organizations to work out a common formula governing Palestinian dealings.

President 'Arafat also believes it is necessary to wait for the general elections, which will be held soon after talks on the subject with the Israeli side are completed. The results of these contacts will inevitably hammer out a formula for intra-Palestinian cooperation.

It must be noted that Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh is one of the closest persons to 'Arafat. 'Arafat relies on him in various difficult political assignments. He has described him more than once as someone who proposes bright and intelligent ideas.

These sources note that the information portfolio might remain vacant because some PNA members believe it is not needed and that an information council or bureau should be set up, as is the case in other democratic states, that would be attached to the presidential office or the council of ministers. This, they add, will help give the media better freedom of expression. Certainly, president 'Arafat will supervise this bureau. He has been doing so since the PLO was in Beirut.

There are many candidates for the chairmanship and membership of the information council. The council will include a number of well-known PLO information figures, who have broad experience, in addition to young media cadres.

Al-Maliki Denies PFLP Intention To Form Party

TA1212194194 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 11 Dec 94 p 5

[Report by Zaki Abu-al-Halawah and Muhammad Abu-Khudayr]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem—Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, a leading Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] activist, has denied any connection between the PFLP and a statement distributed yesterday in the PFLP's name and which attacked Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat.

Al-Maliki said that the statement was fabricated and did not represent the PFLP's position. He also said that there is no move in the PFLP to turn it into an overt party as long as the occupation exists and as long as the Palestinian people have not gained their national rights, including the right of return and the right to self-determination.

He said that there is talk now about examining the feasibility of forming a Palestinian national democratic front that can fill the current political vacuum in the occupied territories created by the political consequences of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. Through this front, supporters of the PFLP, in addition to all democratic figures and forces operating in the occupied territories that reject the Oslo-Cairo agreement, will be able to act and coordinate their activities within the framework of one alliance that will be called "the Rejectionist Front."

In answer to a question about the participation of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad in this front, al-Maliki said: "The talk is about forming a third axis that is not connected to the Authority and its structures and also not connected to the religious axis, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, in order to fill the existing political vacuum. This front will not be limited to the PFLP."

Hamas Wins 91% in University Elections

TA0512190994 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 5 Dec 94

[Report by 'Anat Saragusti]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] won all nine seats of the Student Union at Gaza's Islamic University. Despite the gaudy campaigning, some of which we witnessed last night, the elections passed quietly. Hamas won 91 percent of the votes in the Student Union elections. Two lists were left in the race today, that of Hamas—which won 10 percent more votes than last year—and a small Islamic Jihad list, which won 7 percent of the votes. [passage omitted]

PA Refuses To Extradite Murder Suspects to Israel

NC1212162194 Paris AFP in English 1451 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Dec 12 (AFP)—The Palestinian Authority [PA] is refusing to hand over to Israel two cousins who murdered a Jewish settler and now work in the Gaza intelligence service, one of the cousins told AFP on Monday [12 December].

"The authority told me the Israelis are putting on a lot of pressure to extradite us," Rajah Abu-Sittah told AFP. "The Israelis have threatened to enter Gaza to capture us.

"But I am sure the authority will not listen to the Israelis. The authority will take care of us," he said in an interview.

Rajah and his cousin 'Amr Abu-Sittah shot dead settler Uri Megiddish on March 8, 1993, in a greenhouse at the settlement of Gan Or.

Both were members of the Hawks, armed wing of PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat's mainstream PLO movement Fatah.

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Israel demanded their extradition last September 29 under the autonomy agreement which calls for the Palestinian Authority to hand over Palestinian suspects.

Some Palestinian officials argue that the agreement does not cover offences committed before the signing of the self-rule deal in September 1993.

"I can turn myself in to the Israelis, but on condition that they give us the names of all the Israeli undercover soldiers who have killed Palestinians since the autonomy agreement.

"They should all be handed over to the authority in Gaza," 22-year-old Rajah said.

He listed about a dozen Palestinians murdered by Israel.

However the autonomy accord does not oblige Israel to hand over Israeli suspects to the Palestinians.

Rajah, from Khan Yunus, alleged that Israeli agents have already tried to kill him on numerous occasions and searched his family home just two weeks ago, even though it is in the autonomous area.

Israel has so far submitted three formal requests for suspects to be handed over under the autonomy deal.

Security Reveals Arrest of 'Scores' of Collaborators

TA1212143494 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 9 Dec 94 pp 1, 7

[Report by Khamis al-Turk]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, the Jerusalem Media Office—A responsible Palestinian security source, who prefers to remain anonymous, has said that the Palestinian national security forces and their various branches recently detained scores of individuals suspected of having ties and collaborating with the Israeli Shin Bet.

The source said that those individuals continued their intelligence collaboration with the Israelis even after the signing of the Oslo agreement. He added that most of them will be turned over to the Palestinian Prosecutor-General's Office and that charge sheets will be presented against them in which they will be accused of treachery and undermining the Palestinian people's security. He said that they will be tried in Palestinian courts. [passage omitted]

Police Commander: al-'Abid Assassination Solved

TA1212162194 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] General Ghazi Jabali, the commander of the Palestinian Police, said the Palestinian Police have solved the assassination of Hani 'Abid, the Islamic Jihad activist killed about a month ago when his car exploded in Khan Yunus.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that three collaborators with Israel who lived in Gaza were detained last week. One also worked for the Palestinian police. A fourth collaborator managed to escape. Palestinian sources say that under interrogation the three admitted to having received from an Israeli Shin Bet officer based in a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip, an order to assassinate 'Abid. The police are now investigating whether the suspects planned to murder other Islamic Jihad and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders.

Orient House on Expulsion of Families From Libya

TA1212182494 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Orient House [Palestinian offices in Jerusalem] issued a statement today in which it strongly condemned Libya carrying out their threat to expel 20,000 Palestinians from Libya. The statement added that several days ago the Libyan authorities deported 30 Palestinian families to the Tunisian and Egyptian borders and that these families are still there after more than 10 days at the Libyan, Egyptian, and Tunisian borders. This has led to the death of two children as a result of the severe cold weather. The statement called on Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to intervene personally to stop this tragedy.

Banning Paper Distribution in Gaza Termed 'Fiasco'

TA1212184594 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM TIMES in English 9 Dec 94 p 4

[Article by Hatim al-Husayni, head of Jerusalem's al-Quds University: "Freedom of the Press a Must"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is no reason whatsoever for holding up the Palestinian newspapers at the entrance to Gaza and thus delaying their distribution. You would think it was the Israeli army who did such a thing. But, no. It was the Palestinian police.

That happened for five consecutive days to the astonishment and dismay of all sectors of Palestinian society. Even President Yasir 'Arafat, when hearing the news of the incident the first day, expressed his anger and ordered that the newspapers be distributed immediately.

How could this happen at a time when the Palestinian National Authority declared it would protect the people's rights and freedoms, and the Palestinian police pledged the same thing? The eyes of the world are on us, and we must make every effort to show that we respect human and civil rights, and that we in our new state will protect freedom of speech and expression.

Our Palestinian practice of democracy and freedom must be different from that of all the states around us. We must set the best example for respect of human and

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civil rights. We have in our modern history rejected dictatorship, totalitarianism and violations of people's rights by the police.

It is important to know who is responsible for this fiasco, but more important, steps must be taken by the concerned authorities, such as the Ministry of Information and the police authorities, to protect newspapers and journalists, and make them feel they can write in full freedom and security.

The new Palestinian experiment needs free and open debate at this stage. The problems facing us in the political, economic, social, educational, industrial sectors, and all other sectors, are massive and difficult. They need the input of all experts and professionals. The press, therefore, must open its pages, and welcome this free debate and discussion for the public good.

The press must also act responsibly at this critical stage in Palestinian history. It has an important part to play in building the new nation. It thus must keep away from sensationalism, rumors and unnecessary attacks against a new Palestinian authority that is still struggling to lay the foundations of a progressive, democratic and free state.

The press is the fourth estate. Its attitude could lead to chaos, misunderstanding and rumors or it could lead to stability, public awareness and the factual presentation of the news.

We believe in a free press and that the people should hold the government accountable through a free and honest press. The public good, and the interest of the nation as a whole, should be what the press seeks to protect and promote. It should not become the voice of government or the propaganda machine of one party system. All Palestinians believe this. They want a responsible, trustworthy and factual press that prints what is fit to print.

We have a long way to go. We are still taking the first steps of a difficult journey towards freedom, democracy and security. Mistakes will be made as we move along in our early stages of building, but we must learn from those mistakes and never repeat them.

A new Palestine is being born. Let it be a healthy Palestine, a small land of brotherhood, tolerance and cooperation—a land of justice, peace, full freedom and democracy.

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Algeria

Mubarak Stops Over, Meets With Zeroual

LD1212172494 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak stopped over in Algeria this afternoon en route to Casablanca to participate in the 7th summit of the Islamic Conference Organization to be convened in Morocco tomorrow. [passage omitted]

Following the reception ceremony, Presidents Liamine Zeroual and Muhammad Husni Mubarak held a tete-a-tete working session at the airport VIP lounge.

Zeroual Meets With Media Representatives

LD1212164994 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Head of State Liamine Zeroual received officials of the electronic and printed mass media from the public and private sectors at the presidency this morning. [passage omitted]

The discussion dealt with the security and professional concerns of the information sector. In the course of an address, the head of state stressed before the officials of the information sector that he attaches great importance to this sensitive and strategic area. He said that the information sector is being targeted by terrorist groups because of the great role it plays in reporting the news and enlightening internal and foreign public opinion on what is actually taking place in Algeria.

He added that the process of targeting this sector falls within a series of actions carried out by the terrorists to destroy the country—a series of actions which has been planned by Algeria's internal and external enemies.

He said that the security situation in the country is improving thanks to adopted measures. There are other measures that are to be implemented so that we may finally get rid of terrorism in our country, he asserted.

After listening to the concerns of the media sector as expressed by its officials present at this gathering, the head of state concluded the meeting by an address in which he stressed that he attaches great importance to this sector, and supports all solutions which will eliminate all the problems from which it is suffering, out of his belief in the freedom of the press. This, he said, is a gain which should be preserved and strengthened because, he added, the freedom of the press and pluralism of opinion are essential pillars in building democracy. He asked the information sector to perform its duties, assume its responsibilities, and make its criticisms constructive and based on complete objectivity. [passage omitted]

'Terrorist' Group Dismantled; Two Killed

LD1212204894 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement released today said that the security forces had dismantled a terrorist group in the area of Guemar, El Oued Province. The statement added that after an investigation, the security forces managed to dismantle the group which was involved in an attack on three citizens in Guemar on 9 November [as heard].

The people arrested were named as Lazar Khaled, son of Lazar Ammar who had been killed in Constantine, Zerikat Selim, Cheikha Mohamed, Neguia Mohamed, Soufi Houa and Mahdjer Abdelaziz.

The statement also said that home-made bombs, stolen vehicles and a quantity of ammunition were recovered during the operation. The members of the group were ordered remanded in custody by the examining magistrate.

Another statement said that the security forces killed two terrorists and arrested a third in the municipality of Bir El Ater, in Tebessa Province.

Egypt

Mubarak Instrumental in Libyan Sanctions Decision

NC1312083194 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 9 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by 'Abd-al-Nabi 'Abd-al-Sattar]

[FBIS Translated Text] The recent Egyptian contacts with the United States, Britain, and France have succeeded in aborting a new draft resolution intensifying the international sanctions imposed on Libya.

Western diplomatic sources in Cairo have affirmed that President Husni Mubarak urged U.S. President Bill Clinton, French President Francois Mitterrand, and British Prime Minister John Major not to tighten the sanctions against Libya.

Columnists Criticize West's Treatment of Libya

Press Criticism of Libya Rejected

NC0612191094 Cairo AKHBAR AL-YAWM in Arabic 3 Dec 94 p 20

[Column by Husayn Fahmi: "Toward Tomorrow"]

[FBIS Translated Text] No one has the right to attack Egypt because it supports the fraternal Libyan people. Nonetheless, Egypt is facing press campaigns in some Western states because of its stance. These campaigns do not only constitute a pressure on Egypt but also a blatant intervention in its affairs.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has affirmed that Egypt rejects any pressure or attack on this matter because its stance stems from an objective analysis of the situation in the region, of our relations with fraternal Libya, of

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other states' stances toward Libya, and of our great concern for the Libyan people's interests and for international legitimacy.

Whoever thinks that these attacks and pressures will undermine Egyptian-Libyan relations or Egypt's relations with the other fraternal Arab countries is mistaken. For years some Western states have been attacking Libya's legitimate rights. The U.S. fleet has been used to attack Libya and rockets have been fired at the houses of the Libyan leader in Banghazi and Tripoli. Moreover, international public opinion has been instigated against the Libyan regime.

We don't know on what basis the United States and its allies produce resolutions from the Security Council against the Libyan people, although Libya's stance is based on legitimate and international rights. The nagging question is whether the new world order behind which the United States is hiding gives it this right to intervene in the affairs of other states.

Albright Remarks Assailed

NC0612221694 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 3 Dec 94 p 14

["Dividing Lines" column by Samir Rajab]

[FBIS Translated Text] Most indications are that Madeleine Albright, UN Security Council president and U.S. representative to the United Nations, is running things at the council the way she wants and turning tendencies in the direction that serves the interests of her own country, nothing else! The evidence is that her remarks on Tuesday [29 November], after the issuance of a resolution maintaining the sanctions against Libya, reflect a one-sided viewpoint and prove that the resolution was decided on before the debate was held, perhaps before the subject was originally raised.

When Madeleine says, for example, that she rejects the "compromises" offered by Libya and accuses the Libyan Government of intentionally challenging the Security Council through its failure to hand over the two Libyan suspects to Washington or London, she is certainly insisting on closing all doors. Such a policy is undesirable in international relations because negotiations would be meaningless, dialogue would be useless, and the parties to a war or a conflict would not sit at the same table. This, of course, applies to the Arabs and Israelis, however the Israelis are taking advantage of the negotiations to make as many gains as possible!

Before every meeting to discuss the sanctions, Madeleine seeks to form a lobby inside the Security Council. She uses all known American tools of pressure, including the carrot and stick policy. This explains why seven Security Council members approved the resolution maintaining the sanctions against Libya while only three members rejected it, although Libya was demanding a legitimate right: that the two suspects receive a fair trial, something that can never be done in the United States or Britain.

At another level, I am astonished at the way Washington is handling some international issues, especially Arab issues. The Libyans have repeatedly announced that they are against terrorism, against any terrorist operations anywhere in the world. It is obvious that they are making good on their word. They have not been suspected of anything since they made these assertions. Why not build bridges with them and give them the chance to join the world's political and economic march?

These are mere thoughts that must surely come into anyone's head. The Lockerbie incident was not the end of the world. Scores of incidents take place in the East and the West and are kept in the files of history because the perpetrators are unknown.

Labor Protocol Signed With Palestinian Authority

NC0612135794 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1236 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA)—Egypt and the Palestinian Authority today signed a protocol on technical cooperation between the Egyptian and Palestinian Labor Ministries in the field of labor, the exchange of expertise, vocational training, and work safety.

The protocol was signed by Ahmad al-'Amawi, Egyptian minister of manpower and employment, and by Dr. Samir Ghawshah, the PA minister of labor.

Al-'Amawi said the two sides agreed to form a joint technical committee to implement the protocol. The committee will meet twice a year. The two sides will agree on the venue and date of the meetings. He added that this protocol is a boost for the ties of brotherhood and cooperation between Egypt and the PA and falls within the framework of Arab solidarity and the two fraternal people's common desire to promote and develop cooperation between them in the various fields of activity.

Daily Blames Current Obstruction of Peace on Israel

NC0912073394 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 9 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Dec (MENA)—AL-AHRAM underlines that the Israelis should realize that the peace process was launched on the basis of a commitment to accept the resolutions of international legitimacy. Any attempt to shun that commitment will seriously undermine the peace process, which is already threatened by insinuations that Israel might break its commitments in the agreement it reached with the Palestinians in Oslo, the paper says.

In an editorial today, AL-AHRAM says that what Israel is doing casts many doubts and heartens extremist elements who are opposed to the peace process, since the agreements signed with the Palestinian side have not

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been transformed into practical measures that curb suffering or build confidence. The opposite has happened; the suffering of the Palestinian people has increased with the closure of the territories, the growing oppressive measures, and mounting pressures. Accordingly, there are growing doubts on Israel's seriousness about coexisting in a peaceful spirit.

AL-AHRAM points out that the U.S. Administration must realize that a tour or two by Warren Christopher or other officials will not save the peace process. Peace will be achieved when Israel clearly declares its compliance with the UN Security Council resolutions calling for full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, and not from parts of these territories, AL-AHRAM says.

The paper states that it is no secret for the United States and the international community that the responsibility for the current obstruction of the peace process falls on Israel. Israel must realize that it is impossible to attain peace with the continued occupation, AL-AHRAM concludes.

German Government Approves DM40 Million Grant

NC0912151194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1429 GMT 9 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 9 Dec (MENA)—A responsible source at the Ministry of Public Work and Water Resources announced today that the German Government has approved a grant worth DM [German marks] 40 million for Egypt. [passage omitted]

Sidqi Affirms No Conflict With IMF

NC1012071994 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2245 GMT 9 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Dec (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi has affirmed that there are no conflicts between Egypt and the IMF. He said that there are different viewpoints that can be resolved through discussion and negotiations.

Dr. Sidqi added in an interview with AKHBAR AL-YAWM newspaper to be published in its issue tomorrow, Saturday, that there are firm principles in Egypt's stance toward the IMF and other international monetary institutions. First among these principles is the social dimension and preserving our huge resource of manpower and all our rights and benefits.

The prime minister said that the objective of economic reform is to comprehensively elevate all levels of the citizen's life. He affirmed that the government will not intervene to devalue the Egyptian pound; the pound will be left to the forces of the exchange market alone.

Dr. 'Atif Sidqi affirmed that the government adheres to its policy not to increase the prices of services, pointing out that subsidies of foodstuffs, medicines, treatment, and all other services will not be canceled.

The prime minister said that there are some [word indistinct] increases in prices, but they have no economic bases and nothing to do with the supply and demand forces that govern the market now. He affirmed at the same time that the government will not stand with arms folded in the face of those who are monopolizing products and controlling their availability on the market.

Dr. Sidqi affirmed that there can be no covering up for corruption and that the government, People's Assembly, Consultative Council, and all the popular forces fiercely confront any corruption or deviation. He pointed out that there are laws to deter and fight the phenomenon of corruption and deviation.

IBRD Agrees To Help Finance River Project

NC1212095894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 12 Dec (MENA)—The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD] has agreed in principle to contribute to financing a new river navigation project to turn the Nile River's Rosetta mouth into a first-class navigation route, linking it with the Egyptian Mediterranean ports to serve exports.

Dr. Muhammad al-Mu'tasim Qutb, deputy chairman of the National Center for Water Research and director of the Nile Institute for Research, said the cost of this vital project, which will accommodate maximum loads of river vessels, will be no less than 200 million pounds. [passage omitted]

He added that 5 million pounds has been allocated for studying every aspect of the project.

Government Resumes Diplomatic Ties With Rwanda

NC1212134194 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab Republic of Egypt has decided to resume diplomatic relations with Rwanda and reopen its embassy there. Egypt has nominated Ambassador Zaynab Sahim to be its ambassador to Rwanda, Foreign Ministry Secretary General Ambassador Samih Darwish stated today before leaving for Rwanda and Burundi. During his visit to Rwanda, Ambassador Darwish will convey a message to the Rwandan foreign minister from Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. He will also hold talks to affirm Egypt's readiness to help Rwanda in its reconstruction projects.

Ambassador Darwish emphasized that Egypt has been eager to be among the first states to resume its ties with Rwanda and reopen its embassy now that the conditions are stable there and the Patriotic Front has assumed power.

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Minister Cited on Exports, Central Bank Reserves

NC0312204094 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 3 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Democratic Party's Political Club held an expanded meeting this evening and discussed a number of issues concerning public services in all spheres. The conferees also reviewed plans and programs to develop public utilities in all cities and governorates and the accomplishments in production.

Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mahmud Muhammad Mahmud [Bayyumi] said exports in 1993-94 have increased by approximately 14.5 percent and that more bonds and shares will be issued in the coming phase to meet the demands for them. He added that the Central Bank has more than $17.5 billion in foreign currency reserves.

Members of Police Force Guarding Village Killed

NC1312071094 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2220 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 12 Dec (MENA)—A first sergeant and a regular sentry of the police force were killed by unidentified gunmen tonight, an official source at the Interior Ministry said today.

The source added that at around 1800 today, unidentified gunmen opened fire on the police force guarding the entrance to the village of [name indistinct] in Luxor, killing First Sergeant Hasan Muhammad al-Sayyid and regular sentries Yasir 'Awad Husayn and Ahmad 'Abd-al-Basit 'Ali [number of casualties as received].

Leading officials in the Security Directorate and the criminology laboratory went to the scene to examine it. The security agencies are continuing their efforts to apprehend the assailants.

'Leading Terrorist' Arrested in Asyut

NC0612145994 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1400 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA)—The security agencies have arrested a fugitive leading terrorist, Nadi 'Abd-al-Hakim Mahmud Salamah, who has taken part in several assaults and assassinations against policemen in Asyut.

An official source in the Ministry of Interior stated that the Crime Detection Department in the Asyut Security Directorate, in collaboration with the Public Security Department, has succeeded in locating and apprehending the terrorist, who admitted that he shot at a force from the Manfalut urban center as they were carrying out the order to search his home. He confessed to taking part in the killing of noncommissioned officer Abu-al-Hasan 'Antar 'Abd-al-Hamid and other policemen from the State Security Investigation Department. He led the police to the weapon he had seized from the martyred NCO.

The source added that the arrest was within the framework of continuing efforts to locate fugitive terrorists who were involved in recent security incidents.

A statement notes that the prosecution has been notified to launch an investigation.

Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Body Marks Day

NC1212113694 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1040 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 12 Dec (MENA)—The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization [AAPSO] has denounced the major powers' selective approach toward achieving their interests concerning human rights. It noted that denouncing a stand at one place and remaining silent over the same stand elsewhere will cause grave damage to the human rights issue.

A statement issued today marking World Human Rights Day said one year and a half after the international conference on human rights was held in Vienna in June 1993, it was hoped that the issue would take a turn toward enhancing human rights that merit attention.

The statement affirmed that the ongoing events show that the big powers' interests have the upper hand even where human rights are brutally violated.

The AAPSO statement referred to obvious violations of human rights, double standards in dealing with the Palestinian issue and the massacres in Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Serbs, and practical support for the Serbian stand based on ethnic annihilation and violation of the very right to life.

The statement asked that Human Rights Day be an opportunity to consolidate efforts for the sake of human rights at local, regional, and international levels so that respect for human rights to freedom, dignity, and decent life for mankind will represent an original part of nations and governments' norms worldwide.

Sudan

Al-Bashir Warns Against 'Imperialist' Forces

EA0512165094 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, at the Friendship Hall in Khartoum this morning, addressed the opening session of the eighth conference of the Islamic Academy of Sciences, being held under the theme: Water in the Islamic world; an impending crisis.

His excellency said Sudan welcomed this conference convened at the confluence of the two Niles. He said the

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convening of the conference coincided with attempts by northern powers in the wake of the end of the cold war to impose hegemony. He added that the Third World, to which most of the Islamic states belonged, had since then experienced many setbacks and that the end of the cold war had only brought the Third World hardship, particularly to the Islamic world.

Lt. Gen. al-Bashir said all the indications warned of an imperialist alliance being forged to undermine the prestige of the United Nations and to distort the international order so as to revive the economic structures of the imperial powers in a manner consistent with their aims. He stressed that these powers sought to halt the spread of knowledge and science to Third World states that trying to acquire them. He said the imperialist powers were acting to block every effort to develop the Third World. Al-Bashir said all these phenomena demanded that we sounded the alarm bells in the Islamic world.

He stressed that the conference enjoyed the blessings of all. He called for support for the Islamic Academy of Sciences by way of an intensive regional program. He affirmed that the Sudanese Government would adhere to the resolutions and recommendations of the conference.

Government Imposes Ban on Travel to Libya

AB1212163394 London BBC World Service in English 1515 GMT 12 Dec 94

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sudanese Government appears to be having all sorts of trouble with its neighbors at the moment. Harsh words have been exchanged with Uganda, Egypt, and Eritrea in the last few weeks, and this weekend, Libya was added to the list, as Alfred Taban reports in this telex from Khartoum:

Sudan has taken the unusual step of preventing its citizens from entering Libya. Sudan's ambassador to Libya, (Hashim al-Sid Muhammad), said the decision was taken to check the phenomenon of Sudanese entering Libya without authorization. The ambassador said some Sudanese had got into the habit of sneaking into Libya without any papers. The ban is to last for four months. During this period, said (Hashim), the number of Sudanese in Libya will be recorded. After four months, he warned, no Sudanese will be allowed to enter Libya if his or her papers are not in order.

The ban has come as a surprise here, and it has raised fears that relations between Sudan and Libya, which had been good in recent years, might be cooling. The two countries are supposed to be heading toward integration as part of efforts by the [words indistinct] the two countries to unite the Arab world, but in recent months, not much has been heard of the integration project. The ban is likely to negatively affect thousands of Sudanese who are always on the lookout for a way to leave the country and better their lot.

Up until now, most Sudanese have sought work, education, or medical treatment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or neighboring Egypt. However, the exodus to these two countries has declined considerably in recent months due to the poor relations between these countries and Sudan. Libya was the only country left to turn to.

Government Expresses 'Regret' Over Eritrean Decision

EA0612164294 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 6 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry today issued a statement regarding an official note from the Eritrean Government which was handed to the Sudanese Embassy in Asmara yesterday regarding Eritrea's decision to sever diplomatic relations with Khartoum. The ministry confirmed that members of the Eritrean diplomatic mission in the country had received directives from their government to leave Sudan immediately.

The note of the Eritrean Government claimed that the decision to sever relations had been taken because of Sudan's continued hostile behavior; it also alleged that a particular Sudanese authority was placing restrictions on its the Eritrean diplomatic mission in Khartoum making it difficult for it to perform its mission of promoting relations between the two countries.

The Sudanese Government expressed deep regret over this sudden and unjustified decision. It categorically denied all the allegations made in the note. It reiterated its firm commitment to the policy of good neighborliness and to the charters of the OAU, the United Nations and to all regional and international agreements that are based on respect for neighbors; noninterference in the internal affairs of other states; and the resolution of disagreements through peaceful and diplomatic methods, quite apart from the historical and brotherly relations which bind the two fraternal peoples and countries.

The statement reiterated that the Government of Sudan attached great importance to Eritrea's security, peace, and stability. It was also eager to continue with the solid relations between the two countries and to overcome any obstacle in the path of dialogue and cooperation between Khartoum and Asmara. Based on these principles, the Foreign Ministry today summoned the charge d'affaires of Eritrea and conveyed to him its regret over this decision. It expressed the hope that the Eritrean Government would review this decision as soon as possible.

Ministry Reports Agreement Reached With IMF

EA0712205594 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in English 1800 GMT 7 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sudan and the International Monetary Fund had reached total agreement on all points of disagreement during talks they held in Washington recently. Meanwhile, the IMF approved Sudan's

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economic recovery program and agreed to follow up its implementation through periodical reports to be presented to it.

Finance Minister Abdullahi Hasan Ahmad and governor of the Bank of Sudan, Dr. Sabir, who were representing Sudan in the talks, have signed with the IMF a letter of intent at the conclusion of the talks. The agreement, which will be submitted to the IMF executive board in the next week of next January for ratification, includes a schedule for repaying Sudan's debts to the fund. In a press release it issued, the finance ministry indicated that the agreement with the IMF refers to commencement of normalizing Sudan's relations with the fund.

Talks With Omani Delegation End

EA0912124294 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 8 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudan and the Sultanate of Oman have agreed to work together in regard to regional and international matters. They also agree on the need to achieve Arab and Islamic solidarity, and to overcome Arab differences in the face of regional and international developments.

Foreign Minister Husayn Sulayman Abu-Salih said at the end of discussions at the Friendship Hall yesterday evening with the Omani delegation led by Mr. Yusuf bin-'Alawi bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs, that the two sides have confirmed their determination to work together to achieve the higher aims of the Arab and Islamic nation, pointing out that Arab interests demand overcoming the effect the Gulf War had on Arab-Arab relations.

He explained that during the meeting he laid out the challenges facing Sudan, and the political pressures, the unjustified media onslaught, and the economic blockade it is being subjected to. He explained that Sudan has affirmed that through its Islamic orientation, it has called for a balance of interests and peaceful coexistence, and that it is not working against Western interests in the region.

He said agreement was reached on forming joint technical committees as a mechanism for developing relations between the two countries and achieving joint cooperation in all fields.

Memo on Technical Cooperation Signed With Iraq

EA0912173094 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 9 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A memorandum of understanding has been signed between Sudan and Iraq on the exchange of technical and scientific know-how and training, the development of equipment, and oil exploration.

The minister of energy and mining, Brigadier (retired) Saleh al-Din Karrar, signed on behalf of Sudan, while Dr. Safa Hadi, the minister of oil, signed for Iraq. The memorandum was signed yesterday evening. [passage omitted]

Iraqi Media Chief Praises Common Stance on Issues

EA1012165594 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 10 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The director general of the broadcasting and television establishment of fraternal Iraq, Dr. Sabah Yasin Allali, who is currently visiting the country, has stressed that the common point of view expressed by the media in Khartoum and Baghdad laid down a firm foundation for articulating a common Arab point of view regarding issues of mutual interest, both at the regional and international level.

In a statement to our reporter, he said that, besides strengthening (?effective) media cooperation in all spheres, his visit came within this context. He added that the Western media onslaught against Sudan and Iraq represented the common denominator that made more coordination necessary between the two countries to confront the conspiracies being hatched by arrogant states, as well as to expose their attempts to harm the solidarity of the Arab people, as attempts to humiliate a free people. His excellency praised media organs in Sudan saying that they served the strategic goal of realizing unity of purpose in the Arab nation.

Contacts Planned With Uganda To Settle Differences

EA1112161494 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The president of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, has announced that he reviewed with Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, on the sidelines of the just concluded Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa summit in Malawi, the recent visit of a Kenyan emissary to Sudan, his contacts with the rebel movement, and his European and African tour aimed at bringing about peace in the country. He also added that he discussed with Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi the ways of promoting bilateral relations as well as events in the Horn of Africa. He also had contacts with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. They agreed to have contacts in order to overcome disagreements between the two countries. [passage omitted]

Government Willing To Negotiate With Opposition

MM0812122894 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 Dec 94 p6

[Report by Kamal Hamid: "Sudanese Government Invites Opposition to Dialogue Outside Rebel Framework"]

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[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum—The Sudanese Government has expressed willingness to hold negotiations at home with the unarmed opposition. It strongly denied that the towns of Malakal and Kabwita were the targets of a military attack by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM]. It added that the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) has so far not set a date for the resumption of dialogue with the SPLM.

The government criticized the reported new Egyptian escalation over the disputed Hala'ib triangle. Lenorell Deng, minister and chairman of the Higher Peace Council [name as transliterated, title as published] has told AL-HAYAH that the council would welcome any national reconciliation with the symbols and leaders of the dissolved parties. He said: "Contrary to the previous position of the government refusing to negotiate with the opposition except in a framework including the SPLM, we in the Higher Council are willing to sit down with the opposition abroad and we are convinced that any addition to the internal dialogue would contribute to stability in Sudan. At present, we are holding negotiations with groups which had broken away from the SPLM's unified faction or the group led by John Garang."

AL-HAYAH asked the minister about the claims of an SPLM attack on the town of 'Atar near Malakal and the town of Kabwita. He replied: "We have information confirming that these claims are not true. There have been no attacks by the Garang or Riak Mashar groups. The situation is very stable. We are at present negotiating with Garang's soldiers in the areas of operations because they are now certain of peace."

On the new date for the resumption of the dialogue with the SPLM and the nature of the Kenyan Government's initiative to clear the air between Sudan and Uganda, he said: "So far no new date has been set for the talks. The claim that the date has been set for the fifth of next month is incorrect. We have not lost confidence in the IGADD states, as is evidenced in the fact that the Kenyan Government has expressed willingness to mediate between President 'Umar al-Bashir and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda to settle the recent Sudanese-Ugandan dispute and exchange of accusations between them. The Peace Council welcomes Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi's initiative. We will make a tour of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea and hold talks with these states. The date of the negotiations will be set after that tour because the government has authorized the Higher Peace Council to handle all disputes between the Sudanese factions and between Khartoum and the neighboring states."

On the situation in Hala'ib, the minister said: "The Egyptian Government has from time to time been launching provocative campaigns and has harbored the opposition as well rebels of the [Sudanese] People's [Liberation] Army [SPLA]. These actions are part of the pressures put on us. They are phased tactics meant to show the world that there is a Sudanese-Egyptian dispute. We do not pay much attention to these provocations but at the same time we will not give up our territory at any price. The Egyptian Government must realize that the Sudanese do not forfeit their territory and that such Egyptian provocations cannot possibly be heeded. We believe that the position taken recently by Egypt at the UN General Assembly on Sudan's unity was good. We remind the Egyptians that Egyptian security and Sudanese security are interlinked. Through the foreign ministry, we are trying to ensure success of the Egyptian-Sudanese dialogue through understanding."

Internal Ummah Party Denounces New Oppositionists

MM0612165594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 6 Dec 94 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Sudanese Ummah Party Inside the Country Attacks Khalil Group and Accuses It of Splittism"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The opposition Sudanese Ummah Party's leadership inside Sudan has issued a statement attacking the movement led by Professor Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil, who announced last week the formation of a new opposition alliance. The party's leadership described the announcement made by the Khalil group as "an attempt to fragment the Ummah Party and obstruct the democratic march." [passage omitted]

Government Says in Full Control of Kapoeta

EA1112161594 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Armed Forces' spokesman, Staff Brigadier Muhammad al-Bashir Sulayman, has reiterated the government's commitment to the ceasefire. His Excellency stressed that the Armed Forces have managed to cut off the hostile military action launched by remnants of the rebellion in small groups and in an intermittent fashion on the town of Kapoeta. The government forces are now in full control of the situation in those areas contrary to the lies being reported by some quarters.

In a briefing to media organs today, Brig. al-Bashir said agent John Garang's movement attempted to recapture Kapoeta, considering it an important strategic location through which his movement could get military support. He said Garang is aware that the government forces control over 90 percent of the territories previously occupied by him and that some of the rebellion's commanders have defected to join the Armed Forces. He pointed out that Garang, through this failed operation, has sought to confirm to those supporting the movement that it still controls the situation in those areas.

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Kuwait

Minister on Long-Term Reconciliation With Iraq

LD1212215094 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 2100 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Casablanca—Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah has stressed that reconciliation with Iraq will come after Iraq has carried out all the international resolutions. In a statement to journalists in Casablanca he asked that the word reconciliation be discarded because reconciliation will come after Iraq will have finished implementing all the UN security council resolutions. Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad pointed out that the text of the resolution which will be submitted to the ICO [Islamic Conference Organization] summit provided for the need for Iraq to heed all the international resolutions, but the draft resolution also takes into account the fact that Iraq recently recognized the state of Kuwait within its borders demarcated by the UN, and he said that all this had laid down the foundations for the success of this conference, but it did not go beyond this because what was required from Iraq was to carry out the UN Security Council resolutions.

Saudi Arabia

King Discusses Regional Situation With Gulf Leaders

LD1012193694 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 10 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al Sa'ud, held telephone conversations with his brothers His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, the UAE president; His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of the State of Bahrain; and His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the amir of the State of Kuwait.

These contacts come within the exchange of viewpoints on all the current situations in the Gulf region and consequently the Arab region in general and the issues of common interest.

The leaders also discussed during these calls all the things liable to strengthen the fraternal relations between the Kingdom and the fraternal countries: the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

UK Stand on Fundamentalists Criticized

MS1212134094 London THE INDEPENDENT in English 12 Dec 94 p 11

[Report on interview with Interior Minister Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz by Michael Sheridan in Riyadh; date not given: "Islamists' Challenge Stirs the House of Sa'ud"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh—It is after midnight in Riyadh, but the hour cannot dim the eloquence of Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Interior Minister of Saudi Arabia and brother of King Fahd. He is one of the four or five most powerful men in this traditionally reticent kingdom.

The Islamic opponents of the House of Sa'ud are fewer than "the fingers of one hand", he states. Those in exile in London are in breach of the shari'ah law, he says, and their propaganda, conducted from Britain, should cause the British government to "consider the interests" of Saudi Arabia—a statement of greater resonance in Prince Nayif's courtly Arabic than its translation suggests.

"We are not comfortable with this, because it is taking place in a friendly country with which we have a deep political and economic relationship," he observes. "We respect all the laws and the interests of any country, but at the same time we value our own interests—and any activities against the government of Saudi Arabia will be a key element of our interests."

It is rare for any senior member of the Saudi royal family to meet a foreign journalist. But during a week of interviews and private conversations with some of the most senior figures in the kingdom, it became clear that there is mystification and deep concern among the ruling elite over widespread reports in the West of an upsurge of opposition to the House of Sa'ud.

For almost three hours, Prince Nayif voiced indignation at what he described as false and malicious writing and offered a forceful defence of the government's political and economic record. He also gave a detailed account of the events that led to the recent detention of 157 radical Islamic activists and the flight of the prominent dissident, Muhammad al-Mas'ari, to London. The Home Office has refused Mr Al-Mas'ari's application for political asylum, but an appeal could allow him to stay for at least another year.

To the Islamist charges against the royal family of corruption, loose living and the abuse of power, he replies: "These shortcomings and mistakes can happen in any society. We are trying to solve our mistakes. I would say that nobody is one hundred per cent perfect."

In essence, fundamentalists such as Mr Al-Mas'ari challenge the House of Sa'ud's legitimacy as keeper and interpreter of the Islamic way. In turn, Prince Nayif challenges his religious opponents to prove that they are "any more pious Muslims than we are". At first sight, that would seem to be a tall order.

A 1920s traveller called Riyadh a city where "all that redounds to the glory of man is banned". Remote, austere and withdrawn from the wider Arab world, its inhabitants practised the Wahhabi variation of Islam, renowned for fervent intensity. Prince Nayif's father,

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King 'Abd-al-'Aziz, employed the fiercest Wahhabi warriors, the Ikhwan, to conquer most of the peninsula and to unite the provinces of Najd and Hijaz in one kingdom in 1932.

In the process they seized Mecca and Medina to win for 'Abd-al- 'Aziz a title inherited by King Fahd, the "custodian of the two holy mosques". To this day, the religious police patrol Riyadh with sticks and clubs in search of anyone infringing the shari'ah laws against unveiled women and the consumption of alcohol, while, in the square outside the city's splendid central mosque, beheadings with the sword give regular proof of the shari'ah's ultimate sanction.

The kingdom founded by 'Abd-al-'Aziz rested upon three pillars: the ruling house itself, the Wahhabi religious dogmatists of the Najd and the great merchant dynasties of the Hijaz who traded from the port of Jeddah. At intervals the balance of power and interest shifted as social changes, spurred by a rapid increase in oil revenues, created religious tension between the modern and the reactionary. "Quite clearly," says a Western ambassador, "that pattern is being repeated today."

Prince Nayif says that the Saudi people "respected the need for foreign soldiers" to come to the kingdom during the 1990-1991 Gulf conflict. But in retrospect it is clear that the upheaval of war set off forces beyond the government's control. The subsequent economic burden—Prince Nayif put the total costs of the Gulf war to Saudi Arabia at $70bn (45bn pounds)—combined with lower oil prices to pose a serious financial problem. The Saudi government, however, "gives assurances that it will overcome this crisis".

After the Gulf war the kingdom's consultative council, the Majlis al-Shura, was revived. A new system of provincial government was set up and a basic law drafted to codify a legal system hitherto based on a literal reading of the Koran. But another result was a petition by 109 learned religious figures to King Fahd demanding that the House of Sa'ud cleanse itself and impose Islamic orthodoxy anew throughout society and government. Then, in 1993, Muhammad al- Mas'ari, a physics professor, joined about half a dozen other Islamist thinkers to form a group which entitled itself the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights and published a manifesto of impeccably fundamentalist dogma.

"This was a religious, not a political question for us," says Prince Nayif. Indeed, it is not widely known that the word translated from the committee's title as "legitimate" or even, in the US, "human" rights, derives from the same Arabic root as the word shari'ah. "Legitimate", to the Mas'ari group, is therefore only whatever is founded in Islamic law.

Prince Nayif, however, says the country's Ulema, or religious leadership, endorsed the government's view that the Islamist campaign was actually in violation of the shari'ah, which does not endorse the overthrow of rulers. He says his technique with Mr Al-Mas'ari and other activists was to warn, to persuade and to enjoin conformity with the Ulema. Mr al-Mas'ari, he points out, had been released from detention to ponder the error of his ways when he fled to London. A flow of faxes and telephone calls to Saudi Arabia from the exiles has since renewed the Islamist campaign.

In September, Prince Nayif said, the authorities felt bound to move against preachers who were stirring up gatherings in the mosques of Buraydah, a town north of Riyadh in the fundamentalist heartland of the Najd. "We detained 157 people," he said. "After a while 130 of them admitted they had been enticed into a mistake and asked for a pardon, which was granted. Twenty-seven are still in custody and all of them have connections with organisations abroad which are known to support terrorism—and they have connections with Mas'ari."

Absolute monarchies, of course, are not accustomed to tolerating challenge, and in Prince Nayif the House of Sa'ud possesses a cultivated absolutist of a vintage that would not have disgraced the Ottomans or the Romanovs. "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is capable of facing and destroying these movements," he says. He does not waste words on promises of political reform.

Had he heard, I wondered of De Tacquevilles theory that the period of maximum danger for absolutist regimes is the moment they try to liberalise? "We consider," the Prince responds smoothly, "that since our establishment as a nation we have already been liberated."

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Regime Said To Export Oil Via Iranian Ports

MM1312121194 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Dec 94 p 6

[Report by 'Adnan Husayn: "Shatt al-'Arab Becomes Path for Smuggling Iraqi Oil Via Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—Having in the past been a cause of and stage for the longest and fiercest war in the Middle East, Shatt al-'Arab has now turned into the site of a "secret" active trade between Iraq and Iran focusing on moving Iraqi oil from the west bank of the Shatt to its (Iranian) east bank and then to the Iranian ports of Bushehr and Jazireh-ye Khark on the Arabian Gulf. From there, oil tankers of various nationalities carry the Iraqi oil as though it is Iranian crude and transport it to states which have concluded secret deals with Iraq under which they purchase Iraqi oil at half the world market price ($5-6 a barrel) in return for exporting commodities to Iraq and transferring hard currency. This has become the Iraqi treasury's main source of hard currency.

In accordance with the UN resolutions passed following the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in August 1990, Iraq is banned from exporting its oil, with the exception of some 750,000 barrels a day which the UN Security Council allowed it to export to Jordan to meet its local need for crude and Iraqi oil products, provided the revenue is used to purchase food and medicines from Jordan and other countries.

The information obtained by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT from various sources says that small Iraqi oil containers [hawiyat], known locally as "mujannabat," transport Iraqi oil from small jetties set up recently on the west bank of Shatt al-'Arab and to which the oil is pumped by pipeline from al-Rumaylah oilfields, southwest of al-Basrah, which is situated on the Shatt al-'Arab. Large tank trucks transport smaller quantities from other fields in the south. The information adds that the (Iraqi and Iranian) mujannabat raise the Iranian flag when crossing the line separating the Iraqi and Iranian sides of Shatt al-'Arab, then head for the two Iranian ports of Khorramshahr and Abadan on the east bank of Shatt al-'Arab, where the Iraqi oil is transferred into larger tankers which transport it to the Iranian exporting ports of Khark and Bushehr on the Gulf, where the cargoes are once again transferred into 100,000-tonne capacity tankers flying the flags of various countries.

The information adds that Iranian authorities supply the oil tankers with "manifests" confirming that the oil they are carrying is Iranian. Iran charges about $20 a tonne for these operations.

Iraqi opposition sources confirm that government authorities last year seized vast areas of land and palm orchards on the west bank of Shatt al-'Arab, especially in Abu al-Khasib, south of al-Basrah, where they erected a number of buildings. No one knows anything about the nature of the activities taking place inside these buildings. A prohibited area has been imposed around them. No inhabitants can enter this area. One of these buildings is a palace frequented by members of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's family, including his sons 'Udayy and Qusayy and his son-in-law Husayn Kamil.

According to the sources providing this information, Iraqi oil exports via Shatt al-'Arab include, in addition to the crude, quantities of petrol and diesel fuel. [passage omitted]

Paper Views Articles on U.S.-Egyptian Ties

JN1212151594 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 2 Dec 94 p 2

["Standpoint" column by 'Adil Sa'd: "The United States and the Fate of Agents"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The fact that THE WASHINGTON POST is the main paper at the U.S. President's breakfast table and the only one privileged to have access to U.S. National Security Council documents means this paper is well-informed on what goes on inside the U.S. Administration.

Thus, when this paper calls for a tough U.S. policy toward the current Egyptian regime and drops several hints about the lack of a consensus between Washington and Cairo, this change cannot be construed as a temporary development dictated by the split in U.S.- Egyptian relations, but the outcome of a careful U.S. assessment of the vulnerability of Husni Mubarak's regime and its failure to contain its political and economic crisis internally and regionally, the exposure of its erroneous political actions, and its inability to project the "presentable" image the Americans expect from their agents.

Washington's general attitude to the agents of U.S. policy is to make maximum use of these agents by mobilizing them for plans which serve U.S. interests and thus turning them into obedient tools to carry out the dirtiest and meanest acts, without their subservience helping them to become lasting friends of the American godfather. As soon as the United States feels that a certain agent regime is becoming a burden on U.S. policy, regardless of the services it has rendered to it, or has already fulfilled the role assigned it, then it places it on the list of regimes to be changed or replaced by new agents for a new phase, and begins the initial steps of revealing the cards and exposing whoever it wants to change.

The U.S. Administration has done that in Panama and several other Latin American countries. It has also done it to several agent regimes in Southeast Asia. Among the recent examples was the overthrow of the Shah of Iran and the preparatory steps it has taken against the Saudi regime through the scandals it has obtained from U.S. sources and started publishing on a large scale for several months now.

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Columnist Assails Mubarak's Role in Gulf War

JN1112182694 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 7 Dec 94 p 1

[Article by Salah al-Mukhtar: "Confessions by a Light-Headed, Conscienceless President"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When he met with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad recently, light-headed Egyptian President Husni admitted a fact that he had strongly denied. He said he was used as a tool to work out an international basis for attacking Iraq. Light-headed Husni said literally: "The Arabs' rejection of the aggression on an independent state, as well as the convening of the Arab summit conference in Cairo during the Gulf crisis, paved the way for an international move to liberate Kuwait."

So, Husni confesses that he made the Cairo summit conference take resolutions, whose original drafts he had received from Washington, and condemn Iraq in violation of the Arab League Charter that demands unanimity for such a condemnation. The United States exploited the Arab League's resolutions by sending its troops and condemning Iraq. Criminal George Bush carried out this mission immediately in accordance with a Security Council resolution. This means that the light-headed man aborted a mini-Arab summit conference that would have taken place to reach an Arab solution demanded by the majority of the Arabs. This ruled out any solution other than the international one, which was certainly hostile to the Arabs, as proved by the 30-state aggression on our country.

Following this confession, can Egyptian diplomacy defend its president's position, which resulted in the martyrdom of a million Iraqi citizens whose lives would have been spared if the Arab solution had been adopted? Is that diplomacy aware of the meaning and the possible consequences of the recent confession of criminal, light-headed Husni?

Let Egyptian diplomacy know that Iraqi blood is dear and that those who took part in shedding it will pay the price on time and in light of the extent of the crime.

Radio Responds to Mubarak's 'Fabrications'

JN1112212694 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1913 GMT 11 Dec

[Unattributed announcer-read "political report"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] I had those feelings and thoughts as I was reading the remarks by Egyptian President Husni Mubarak to the men of the judiciary in Egypt last night. In his remarks, regrettably, Mubarak said things containing a great deal of fabrications, lies, and hollow haughtiness about Iraq. Although a person with such manners is not worthy of the trouble of being responded to, the problem is that this loud-mouthed liar is the president of the largest Arab country and that he was talking to the Egyptian men of judiciary, who are known to be a leading sector in the Egyptian society. Moreover, failing to refute his lies and fabrications will give them credibility of which they do not deserve an iota.

Speaking of Iraq, he, who the changing times and the Americans posted as the president of Egypt, said that Egypt extended a helping hand to Iraq when its military situation in its war with Iran deteriorated. He said Egypt provided Iraq with weapons to defend its territory. We tell this liar that after the Soviets halted their arms shipments, which Iraq used to receive in accordance with the Iraqi-Soviet agreement, in a Soviet tactical maneuver through which they sought to approach the Khomeyni regime, Iraq began to look for its needs of arms and material in the world arms market. It bought arms and military material from East Europe through brokers. It also purchased weapons from China. During that period, the Egyptian military attache in Addis Ababa contacted Iraq and expressed Egypt's readiness to sell Iraq surplus Egyptian military material. After talks that lasted months, Egypt sold Iraq—its sister Arab country defending its own territory and the Arab nation—material at prices over 50 percent more than the world arms markets. Iraq was aware of the high prices of the Egyptian war material and to whose pockets the profits of selling such weapons to Iraq went. Moreover, Iraq was aware that a large amount of that material was neither Egyptian nor surplus. Rather, it was imported by the Egyptian authorities from East Europe. After adding a high margin of commissions and profits, that material was reexported to Iraq. However, with its known wisdom, patience, and willingness to bring the Egyptian regime, despite its fragility, into the pan-Arab positions that it had left since the death of late 'Abd-al-Nasir and after 1973, Iraq agreed to pay higher prices to the Egyptian side to purchase non-Egyptian arms and material. This is the help that Mubarak claims to have been extended to Iraq in the era of al-Sadat and in his auspicious era. So who was supporting whom?

In another fabrication, Mubarak added that Egypt did not respond to Iraq's request for assault weapons to attack deep into Iran. The fact is completely different. Iraq did not request from Egypt assault weapons for use inside Iranian territory for the simple reason that Egypt did not possess such sophisticated weapons for deep penetration. Egypt possessed a small number of old bomber planes unfit for such missions. As for Iraq, it possessed more modern weapons, such as the Su-22 aircraft. It also possessed the older aircraft, Su-16. It developed its air force through the use of midair refueling and turning Mig-25 planes from fighter planes into long-range bomber planes.

The Iranians know this very well. So do the U.S., Russian, and other intelligence services. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that Iraq needed such weapons and that Egypt had such types of weapons. Would it not be in keeping with your loyalty to the Iraqis, your brothers in Arabism and fate, and to the Iraqi squadron which carried out the first air sorties in 1973 from

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Egyptian bases, raided the Bar-Lev line and the Israeli ground defenses deep in Sinai and fought until many of its pilots were martyred, generously offering their souls for Egypt, if you offer some assistance to Iraq? No, you do not have any sense of loyalty.

How can you say that Iraq had asked Egypt—a request which Iraq had not submitted—that it wanted to use these weapons to commit aggression against the Iranian heartland? Was Iraq committing aggression against Iran or defending itself and the Arab nation?

Do you not remember your letters to the Iraqis during the war with Iran? You used to urge them to strike at the Iranian depth and to destroy Iranian economic and oil facilities and to paralyze them. You used to wonder and to stupidly ask: Why do you not attack these facilities, while the successive military communiques used to daily list the names and locations of these targets that are deployed deep inside Iran and which the hero Iraqi pilots used to raid and which were hit by the al-Husayn and al-'Abbas nmissiles?

Slanderer Mubarak then says: I went to Iraq during the difficult situation it was facing in al-Faw. I visited Iraq while Iraq was being struck with Iranian missiles, and the Iraqi president at the time admitted the mistake the Baghdad summit had committed and the erroneous decision of isolating Egypt, and that this shows that Egypt's stands are based on principles. We reply to this calumny by saying: You did not leave for Iraq of your own accord but at the insistence of King Husayn. Iraq is a great state which you cannot confront with your weakness or the inferiority complex from which you suffer. That's why you stayed only two hours, after which you fled back to your country.

As for you saying that Presdent Saddam Husayn admitted to you that Baghdad summit resolution was a mistake, this is one of your fabrications because Saddam Husayn is a man of his word and a man who abides by his stand. Also, the Baghdad summit was not targeted against Egypt, the state and the people, but against the policy of al-Sadat who was panting after the Zionist entity.

Now, who are the real upholders of principles?

May God have mercy on those who know their own worth, and who avoid insulting people. May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

Paper: 'Economic Crisis' Causing Downfall of Fahd

JN1112103494 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0820 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 11 Dec (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has expressed confidence that Saudi Arabia's severe economic crisis, brought on by King Fahd's commitment to financing aggression on Iraq, will precipitate the downfall of his regime.

In an article today, the paper calls Fahd's claim that the country's crisis will work itself out in three years an act of deception and attempt to appease his American masters, who are upset by Riyadh's failure to meet the terms of arms contracts. The paper cites a French press agency report that Saudi Arabia is $70 billion in the red, which explains why Fahd requested a rescheduling of $10 billion in debts to Washington.

Fahd, who bankrolled American forces of invasion under the illusion that his services can help his regime survive, now finds he is in an unenviable position.

AL-THAWRAH said it is regrettable that such a shallow personality should be in charge of an Arab state. The poor language in which he couched his recent statements showed him to be lacking even the basics of education and culture.

'Aziz on Means To Improve Ties With France

JN1212123794 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today received Ahmad Shakir, president of the Iraq-France Relations Development Society, and his delegation.

During the meeting, they discussed relations between Iraq and France and means to improve them. They stressed the need to restore these relations to their previous status in order to realize the interests of the two friendly people.

The meeting was attended by Khalid 'Abd-al-Mun'im Rashid, adviser at the Presidency and member of the Foreign Relations Bureau of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

Number of Islamist Detainees Reportedly Released

JN1312120594 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 13-19 Dec 94 p 32

[FBIS Translated Text] Unconfirmed sources have told AL-SABIL that the Iraqi authorities have released a large number of Islamist detainees. Reports had recently spoken of large-scale arrest campaigns launched by the Iraqi authorities in the ranks of the Islamic movement. Some reports said that 3,000 persons were arrested during these campaigns. The same sources have asserted that only a few detainees now remain in Iraqi jails.

The [Jordanian] Islamic Action Front had earlier sent a cable to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn asking him to release the detainees in Iraqi jails.

Saddam Orders Irrigation Project Funding

JN0912163094 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 28 Nov 94 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn has ordered the allocation of 16 million dinars for supplying irrigation water to agricultural lands and orchards in al-Faris District, Salah al-Din Govenorate.

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Announcing this, Agriculture Minister Nizar Jum'ah al-Qasir said the enginering teams of the al-Qadisiyah Company for Land Reclamation will immediately begin implementing the leader president's orders to build canals and headgates on the western canal of the al-Ishaqi project and other similar feeder regulators, crossing bridges, roads, and siphons.

The minister pointed out that this generous offer is aimed at expanding the agricultural area by tackling the scarcity of water in this region.

'Major Irrigation Project' Begins

JN1212144194 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 30 Nov 94 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Basrah—The Department of Agriculture in al-Basrah Governorate, in cooperation with al-Faw Company for Implementation of Irrigation Projects, has begun implementing a major irrigation project in the villages west of the al-'Izz River.

Making this announcement, Governor Latif Mahal Humud said the project includes the installation of two giant pumps, each with a pumping capacity of one cubic meter of water per second, the digging of two main canals and several other irrigation canals, and leveling the embankments of these canals up to a length of 12 kilometers in order to irrigate the agricultural lands which have recently been distributed to the sons of the marsh inhabitants on the western bank of the al-'Izz River. He added that this project is the first phase of a strategic project that will be implemented in 1995 to develop marshland villages and improve their social conditions.

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Rabin on PLO Elections, IDF Redeployment

TA1212163294 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Dec 94

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has suggested that elections in the territories be held sooner than scheduled, without evacuating IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops from Arab population centers in Judaea and Samaria. This was stated by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin today. Judging by the Oslo talks, the Palestinians are still opposed to this approach.

Rabin added that the main problem lies in deciding on how the interim arrangement—the next stage of the Declaration of Principles—will be implemented. Negotiations on the arrangement as a whole will require a great deal of time, Rabin said, which is why Israel would like to find a way to hold elections without the IDF redeploying in Judaea and Samaria; Israel would like to defer the implementation of the agreement until after the elections.

[Begin Rabin recording] It is inconceivable—at least as far as we are concerned—that we should implement the clause on elections and early IDF pullout from population centers before agreement is reached on the overall picture of the interim arrangement. [end recording]

The prime minister hoped that the mode of the interim agreement's implementation would be finalized within a week or two. It was meanwhile decided that when the talks resume under the leadership of Uri Savir and Nabil Sha'th in Cairo on 14 December, the sides will address the details of election modalities.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1600 GMT on 12 December adds: "We have just heard that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat said in Stockholm he was astonished by Rabin's remarks. He said: I am astonished because no one can accept to carry on an election in the presence of the occupying power."]

Rabin Rejects Talk of Military Action in Lebanon

TA1212182894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has rejected the talk about the need to bolster military activity in south Lebanon. He said there is nobody we can take action against there and sometimes the price for such actions is very high. The prime minister gave as an example the terrorist attacks in Buenos Aires and London, which were in retaliation for two successful operations against Hizballah: the capture of Mustafa al-Dirani and the attack on the ('Ayn al-Dahr) base.

Our correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the prime minister believes that Syria will not permit developments in the negotiations between Israel and Lebanon even if there is progress in the talks with Damascus.

Peres: Differences With Palestinians Can Be Bridged

TA1212182694 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 12 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, in Stockholm, by Ya'el Qovetz—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Qovetz] Shalom, sir.

[Peres] Shalom to all.

[Qovetz] The addresses you and Yasir 'Arafat made at the Swedish Parliament today sounded quite optimistic. Are you really optimistic?

[Peres] I am. There are differences of opinion between us, but none that cannot be bridged. We are used to it. Each side naturally has its own priorities, and we hold meetings in order to find common ground.

[Qovetz] Contrary to the calm and calming remarks made by you and the prime minister, Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] yesterday said explicitly that a crisis is under way.

[Peres] Well, he sees the situation as a crisis, but I do not think so. I do not think this is a correct description of the situation. We are simply searching for a way to bridge our differences.

[Qovetz] Tell us, then, what the differences are at the moment.

[Peres] No, I will not do that, because in my opinion, any such statement only intensifies them. Basically, we are insisting on our security needs, while they would like to see redeployment and elections take place. The redeployment matter raises security problems.

[Qovetz] Some might say that the Israeli phased withdrawal proposal, namely the proposal for elections without withdrawal, is another Israeli attempt—similar to the one a few weeks ago, when Israel suggested that the army should withdraw for three days, and then return—to put off the difficult moment of withdrawal, which shows that its attitude is not serious.

[Peres] Everyone can say what they like. We are not negotiating because of what people say, we are engaged in real discussions, and what we need is to find a real solution. I am not overlooking the discrepancies, but I am experienced enough to know that they can be overcome.

[Qovetz] Do you believe the Palestinians will accept this proposal?

[Peres] I refuse to speculate at this point. As we told the Palestinians, we are not forcing anything on them, and neither are we reneging on any agreements. We are simply searching for a way to ensure utmost security.

[Qovetz] Do you have alternative proposals up your sleeve?

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[Peres] We are searching.

[Qovetz] Will these issues be finalized in high-level talks, for instance between yourself, 'Arafat, and the prime minister, or will they be relegated to the delegations?

[Peres] The delegations will meet on Wednesday this week in any event.

[Qovetz] Which of the two options offered to the Palestinians does Israel prefer? Which one would Israel prefer?

[Peres] I read a report about these options, and it was overly simplistic. I repeat: Israel wants to guarantee the security issue; that is our main concern.

[Qovetz] A report published here said there are disagreements among the Palestinians themselves. Is that your impression, too?

[Peres] I do not think anyone has formed a view as yet. We should distinguish between the negotiating stage and the stage at which accords are reached. We are still at the negotiating, not the final stage. [passage omitted]

Peres on 'Terrorism' Threat in Lebanon, Syrian Role

TA1312085694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 13 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, in Stockholm, by Hayim Zissowitz on 13 December—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Zissowitz] After the death of an Israeli soldier and the wounding of others earlier this week in south Lebanon, the commander of the Northern Command said that it is the duty of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to contemplate an offensive initiative. Do you subscribe to such a view?

[Peres] I do not know what that term means, and I would rather not use a term that is unclear to me. The IDF launched an offensive initiative on a previous occasion, but that did not solve the problem. We must proceed with the utmost care, in view of the bloody price we paid for various initiatives in Lebanon and the results they yielded. Too much blood has been shed in Lebanon, and our efforts there did not yield the results we had hoped for. Therefore, I would be careful not to use such general terms.

[Zissowitz] On the other hand, officers and soldiers claim that they are easy targets for the terrorists as they move around south Lebanon.

[Peres] There is no argument about that at all. I am sure the government will give its full support as far as protecting the soldiers and preventing terror attacks is concerned.

[Zissowitz] Does the IDF activity against the terrorists in Lebanon take into account the Syrian involvement and political considerations?

[Peres] They are definitely taken into account. As you know, the Syrians deny their involvement; however, people who support terror do not necessarily support the truth.

[Zissowitz] Do you accept the Syrians' denial?

[Peres] As I said, not everybody who supports terror also supports the truth. There is no doubt that the Syrians cannot say that they are responsible for Lebanon, but are not responsible for the terror there. Their responsibility must be undivided.

IDF Orders PLO's al-Rujub Not To Leave Jericho

TA1212190794 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 12 Dec 94

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] last night issued an order banning Jibril al-Rujub, the head of the Palestinian security service in the West Bank, from leaving Jericho. Al-Rujub told Yoram Kohen, our correspondent in the territories, that he received the order from the joint Israeli-Palestinian liaison office. The order was apparently issued following a confrontation Saturday night between several al-Rujub people and IDF soldiers at the 'Awjah roadblock north of Jericho.

Our correspondent adds that senior IDF sources have for some time been demanding that the activity of al-Rujub's people in the West Bank be restricted. On the other hand, security elements have recommended permitting the Palestinian security service to start preparing to operate also outside Jericho.

Cabinet Briefed on Lebanon, PA-Hamas Talks

TA1212123994

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 12 December in a page A2 report by Yerah Tal writes that "Major General Matan Vilna'i, the deputy chief of staff, yesterday told the cabinet that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has taken all the necessary precautions in south Lebanon and along the northern border following the recent Hizballah attacks against IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army] forces. Vilna'i briefed the cabinet prior to yesterday's incident in south Lebanon, in which an Israeli officer was killed and seven soldiers were injured.

"Maj. Gen. Vilna'i told the ministers that although Israel is doing its best to prevent the situation in south Lebanon's security zone from deteriorating, the matter is not solely in Israel's hands. Vilna'i noted that although the recent attacks against the SLA, in which eight soldiers

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were killed, 'had not demoralized the SLA units, additional attacks involving casualties could have such an effect.'

"Vilna'i stressed that the IDF and SLA are prepared and determined to fight the terrorists and 'viewed Hizballah's attacks and attempted raids as a challenge to be confronted and overcome.' Political sources in Jerusalem reiterated yesterday that Hizballah would not have stepped up its activity without a green light from Damascus.

"The sources quoted Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's remarks from 8 December, according to which the Hizballah attacks would not have taken place without Syria's approval. Rabin said that not even one soldier or civilian has been killed on the Golan Heights since the signing of the Disengagement Agreements with Syria. In Lebanon, however, which was not included in the agreement with Syria, dozens of soldiers have been killed.

"The conclusion from all this, said the political sources, is that only a peace agreement with Syria will put an end to the attacks in south Lebanon."

Writing on page A3 of the same edition of HA'ARETZ, Yerah Tal reports that "at yesterday's weekly cabinet session, security officials said that the defense establishment has received warnings of a possible increase in terrorism over the next two weeks.

"Security officials noted that over the next few days, the Palestinians will mark the anniversary of several historic dates, such as the founding of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine on 14 December. It is also believed that the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, and Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres will lead to additional attempts to carry out terrorist attacks.

"The security sources also told the cabinet that there has been little progress in contacts between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Security officials noted that the contacts are not being held at the interorganizational level between Fatah and Hamas but between the recognized representatives of the PA and the Islamic group. At the meeting, Police Commissioner Asaf Hefetz reported an increase in violent crime and property offenses in the territories.

"Hefetz said this is the result of a deterioration in the economic situation in the territories, particularly in Gaza. As a rule, experience indicates that crime soars in direct relation to poverty. The security officials also briefed the ministers on the atmosphere in the territories following the Nobel Peace Prize awards and on the eve of negotiations on the implementation of the next stage of the Oslo agreement.

"The officials reported on the demonstrations that were held in the territories by opponents of 'Arafat and the Oslo agreement on the day the PLO chairman received the prize. The officials pointed out that a majority of the Palestinian public in the territories is demanding speedy elections immediately after the IDF withdraws from the Palestinian population centers. The prevailing assessment is that as the date of elections nears, tensions in the territories will heat up and there will be more terrorist attacks."

A report by military correspondent Eytan Rabin on pages A1 and A2 of the same edition of HA'ARETZ notes that "Major General 'Amiram Levin, the commander of the Northern Command, said yesterday that 'the war with Hizballah is an ongoing struggle. We will keep on doing a good job fighting them with great determination. Hizballah is a serious opponent, but the term "daring" is not the right way to describe its activities. They carry out hit-and-run operations against soldiers and civilians.'

"Levin says that 'we are in the midst of a difficult struggle with the terrorist organizations, led by Hizballah, who employ guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics. Hizballah has scored a few successes, but these will stop.' Levin said that "we will have to take the initiative and attack the terrorists. The terrorist organizations clearly have no qualms about shooting at civilians, and anyone who is prepared to harm women and children from their own community has no problem hitting residential areas in south Lebanon.

"Maj. Gen. Levin and other officers from the Northern Command have begun formulating plans to stop the Hizballah attacks and launch preemptive strikes against the organization's bases. During a visit to soldiers wounded in yesterday's ambush, Levin said that 'we will eventually have to defeat Hizballah. We will have to seize the initiative and attack them.'

"Senior military sources said that since Maj. Gen. Levin assumed his post, he has been busy preparing plans. The sources said that 'Levin believes that the IDF should completely change its deployment vis-a-vis the war in south Lebanon.' The sources said that 'Levin has serious plans, which he will present to the General Staff'."

'Main Achievements' of Christopher Mission Reported

TA0812195794 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 8 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by Moti Bassok and Dan Avidan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There will be an immediate halt to the mutually hostile declarations made by Syrian and Israeli leaders and both countries' ambassadors to the United States will soon resume their meetings in Washington. An attempt will also be made to include senior military officers and other experts in the meetings.

These were the main achievements of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's's brief shuttle mission to the region.

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Senior political sources assert that one of the conclusions of Christopher's visit is that the U.S. Administration will soon conduct a situation assessment on ways to resume the negotiations between Syrian and Israel.

Syrian President al-Asad remains opposed to secret negotiations with Israel and has not changed his position regarding his demand for a prior Israeli commitment to withdraw from all of the Golan Heights before he defines the nature of peace Syria is prepared to establish with Israel. [passage omitted]

Both sides have also analyzed and assessed the intentions of the Syrian president and Damascus' plans for the near future.

Part of the meeting between Christopher and Rabin dealt with the continuation of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, Israel's plans for IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in the West Bank, and the upcoming elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for the autonomy council.

After the meeting, Rabin told correspondents that there had been no significant change in Syria's positions. Certain difficulties may be possible to overcome in the future.

The prime minister refused to be more specific but apparently in the future the Syrians will agree to let senior officers from both armies sit in on some of the discreet meetings between the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors in Washington, Walid al-Mu'allim and Itamar Rabinovich, in a bid to promote issues related to the security arrangements. [passage omitted]

Commentary: 'Miracle' Needed for Talks With Syria

TA0912122994 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 6 Dec 94 p 2

[Commentary by Shim'on Schiffer: "Jerusalem and Damascus are Waiting for a Miracle"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Secretary of State Warren Christopher's predecessors usually did not stop at any means to achieve their goals, whether imposing agreements or resolving international crises. They exerted brutal pressure on heads of state; James Baker once told Shamir to ask for him through the White House operator. Others employed the media. They did all sorts of things.

The approach taken by Christopher, who is arriving today in Jerusalem after meeting Syrian President al-Asad in Damascus, is totally different: he is an advocate of discreet negotiations, while fairly presenting each side's respective positions to the other.

One must admit that this approach has not proved itself particularly fruitful so far. On Rabin's explicit request, Christopher has so far refrained from making proposals of his own in order to bridge the gaps between Jerusalem and Damascus. He has been content with the role of postman.

Over the past year, Rabin has been striving to initiate a direct and secret dialogue with Syria. Rabin believes that in such talks, both sides will be able to lay all their cards on the table. Al-Asad has rejected all the Israeli feelers. He continues to adamantly demand that Israel declare in advance its readiness to carry out a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Christopher's current visit to the region comes at a particularly difficult time; the secretary is the representative of an administration that has just taken a severe beating. Congress is now controlled by a Republican majority which is not enthusiastic about helping al-Asad's Syria or removing it from the list of countries which sponsor terrorism.

In other words, there is no certainty that Christopher holds the carrot and the whip which are so essential for anyone purporting to play the role of mediator.

Officials in Jerusalem are divided with regard to the pessimistic statements recently made by al-Asad. In a report to the prime minister and the foreign minister on the eve of Christopher's visit, Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to Washington, expresses the assessment that despite al-Asad's remarks, Syria intends to continue the negotiations. Rabinovich explains that al-Asad's statements stem from a sense of "distress" after Israel's progress on the other negotiating tracks have weakened Syria's position.

On the other hand, David Afeq, who heads the Foreign Ministry's research and evaluation department, believes that "the problematic formulation of Syria's positions is meant to compel the Americans to show greater assertiveness in the negotiations and become a more active mediator."

Almost all political elements in Israel share the assessment that it would come as a total surprise if Christopher's current visit to the region breathes new life into the talks between Syria and Israel or make al-Asad or Rabin budge from their positions: it would simply be a miracle.

Paper Says Syria No Longer Key to Region

TA1212080794 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 11 Dec 94 p B2

[Commentary by Gay Bekhor: "The Empty Pockets of al-Asad's Overcoat"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Syria plays a critical role, and there will be no peace in the region without peace between Israel and Syria," U.S. President Bill Clinton determined unequivocally in Syria last month, with the Syrian president standing next to him, smiling and content. Because Hafiz al-Asad would not travel to

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Washington—unlike other world leaders, who make pilgrimages there—the President of the only global superpower went to Damascus, although he did not know what his meetings there would yield.

U.S. diplomacy believes Syria carries serious weight and is certain of its key position in the Middle East. Even in Israel, political and military figures alike believe al-Asad is the leader of a particularly important regional superpower, without which nothing will budge in the Middle East. They feel that Syria must be catered to and that the only way to change the regional reality is to give it back most of the Golan Heights. Political and military echelons in Israel tend to portray al-Asad as an expert at managing his interests in the region. To this day, the heads of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch consider it very important to achieve peace with Syria.

On the eve of the first Clinton-al-Asad meeting in Geneva last year, Yo'el Marcus wrote in HA'ARETZ that "Rabin is waiting for al-Asad or, more precisely, he is waiting for al-Asad to utter one word that will change the shape of the entire region." As far as the Israelis are concerned, this sentiment has not changed. Israel followed the joint al-Asad-Clinton news conference in Damascus with great anticipation. Over the years, we grew accustomed to myths spread here by U.S. visitors such as Edward Djerejian, Henry Kissinger, and James Baker. They would often speak in admiration of al-Asad's "bladder tactics" and of the way he drags prolonged discussions well into the wee hours of the morning and wears down his opponent. "Al-Asad is endowed with an incredible amount of physical and mental self-control," wrote Lebanon's Karim Paqraduni in "Lost Peace," his book of praise for the Syrian president, published in the mid-1980's. "Al-Asad never tires, and in order to have the last word, he can hold out until the 25th hour, if he so desires."

But is this assessment of Syria's importance and dominance correct? A review of Syrian achievements shows a real gap between the myth of the Syrian leader and his current strength. Looking at the past four years, the findings do not flatter the "Syrian lion" (his name means lion in Arabic) or his policy, but they do point to an interesting phenomenon: The smaller al-Asad's room for maneuver gets, the larger and more powerful the myth surrounding him becomes. There is at least one good explanation for this: A perspective of time and analysis is needed to recognize new regional processes, while myths take hold and are hard to uproot. Sometimes, they live forever.

The Egyptians coined what in Israel is called "the Basyuni theory," according to which an Israeli-Syrian peace accord would eventually sweep all other Arab partners into the process. Egypt's Ambassador Muhammad Basyuni used to tell the Israelis: "Al-Asad, whom I know personally, has an overcoat. Lebanon is in one of its pockets, Jordan is in the other, and the Palestinians peep out from his pants pocket." This theory proved wrong. The belief that Husayn would not dare come forward before al-Asad became an Israeli axiom, supported by Intelligence Branch experts. And yet, this is precisely what happened.

King Husayn, who is perfectly aware of the regional balance of power, understood far before Israel and the United States that al-Asad's position as a regional threat has been undermined. From Jordan's point of view, he no longer constitutes a critical threat, as he did in the early 1970's. Israeli—Jordanian peace is friendly and normal, free of the inhibitions characterizing the peace with Egypt. Such a scenario would have seemed like pure science fiction only a few years ago.

No high-level contacts are presently held between the Jordanian and Syrian regimes. It appears that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat is also managing very well without al-Asad. The Syrian leader, who for years meddled in PLO affairs—for example, via his al-Sa'iqah organization (which was part of the PLO until 1984); by agitating against 'Arafat in Beirut in 1982; or by encouraging subversive action in Fatah later on—today lacks any effective tools for causing damage to or otherwise influencing the Palestinian issue. It is true that Palestinian rebels and Rejectionist Front organizations keep their headquarters in Damascus, but their voices are no longer heard in the Palestinian camp; 'Arafat is out of their reach and enjoys Israel's protection.

Syria's ability to use international and personal terrorism has also been limited by the changing international circumstances. This is why Syria cannot use Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] as it used Hizballah a decade ago.

The classic Syrian thesis, calling for the full return of all land prior to normalization, has not been implemented since the peace agreement with Egypt: The Palestinians provided Israel with normalization before getting land back; Husayn agreed to several arrangements which al-Asad terms "heresy," such as leasing land to Israel or an exchange of territory; Arab countries are establishing diplomatic ties with Israel (Morocco, Tunisia, and several Persian Gulf emirates in the near future). All of this is being done without any regard for Syria's opinion. Eight years ago, Morocco's King Hassan was deeply troubled when Syria recalled its ambassador after Prime Minister Peres' public visit to his palace at Ifrane, whereas today nobody cares about Syria's position on much more serious issues. The Casablanca conference and the Amman conference scheduled for next May reflect the victory of the Israeli thesis and the defeat of the Syrian naysayer's strategy. Every new Arab country hosting an Israeli delegation or establishing ties with Israel is tantamount to another stab in Damascus' back.

In February 1991, immediately after the Gulf war, the Persian Gulf states rejected Syria's proposal to participate in their regional defense. Syria is no longer a threatening force. Even though the offices of the Arab

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boycott are located in Damascus, six Gulf states have decided to lift the secondary boycott on Israel. Such daring was inconceivable only a few years ago. The same holds true for Syria's nonattendance at the multilateral peace talks: If it thereby hoped to deter other countries from participating, it was sorely mistaken. Nobody in the Arab world paid any heed to Syria's defiance, with various countries rushing to join in the hope of reaping economic benefits.

Today Syria is being treated like any other country. It is true that Lebanon has almost turned into a Syrian district—so much so that Syria has even proposed to send one Syrian-Lebanese delegation to the peace talks, headed by a Lebanese chairman. But in what way does this contribute to Syria's regional standing or to its economy? Lebanon is an insignificant state and Syria, by controlling it, has not attained dominance or influence over other, more important countries. The same holds true for Hizballah.

Syria, which permits Hizballah to launch military operations in Lebanon, is benefiting less and less from this activity. Its image in the West has suffered; its already sensitive relations with Iran put it in a precarious position, because changing its policy toward Hizballah would cause a rift with Tehran; and its support of Hizballah's bid to harm Israel is not effective in the long run.

The U.S. boycott, brought on by Syria's sponsorship of terrorism, cramps the Syrian economy, although some 10 days ago, the Europeans decided to lift some sanctions, ostensibly in order to encourage Syria to embark on the right path. Although it is true that the Syrian economy has been growing at the annual rate of 7 percent in the wake of the steps toward economic openness taken since the early 1990's, this apparently does not amount to a real economic success. In economic spheres, like in foreign relations, President al-Asad's performance is that of a passive and hesitant leader who lucked out when oil fields yielding about 600,000 barrels a day—more than half of which is exported—were found in Syria four years ago.

Yet Syria's structural problems are so dire that there is no certainty the growth will continue. Three years ago, approximately 11 foreign companies dealing with energy operated in that country; only four remain there today. The others, deterred by the bureaucracy and constraints enforced by the regime, left. Al-Asad has difficulty adopting a clear economic policy, and the Syrian economy, trapped in a centralist socialist structure, is groping for a solution. With a 3.6-percent annual birthrate—one of the highest in the region—and an enormous unemployment rate—30 percent is some people's estimate; with a persistent, oppressive housing shortage; and with a swelling foreign debt—$12 billion to Russia alone—the picture is not encouraging at all. It is even less so in the wake of some recent surveys indicating that Syrian oil will run out in the next decade.

Syria still remains a country whose modest budget of $8.5 billion (at the real pound rate) is supposed to meet the needs of a population of 14 million. And while Israelis refer to Syria as a haven of political stability, the picture may change in one fell swoop when al-Asad, the omnipotent ruler, leaves the scene. The president has left the succession issue open, hesitating to appoint an heir after the death of his son, Basil. Al-Asad belongs to the Alawi minority, and in a country made up of a mosaic of minorities, the succession issue may sweep all of Syria into instability similar to that of the 1960's.

Thus, every aspect of al-Asad's performance in the 1990's seems to be that of a hesitant leader who fears any local or regional initiative. The failures and shortcomings of his foreign and economic policies only confirm this. If in the eras of political and interbloc standoff—the 1970's and 1980's—conservative, bullying leadership could be perceived as the bastion of mythical power, in the dynamic 1990's, which mark the collapse of old structures, such leadership reflects weakness and regression. President al-Asad's narrowing inter-Arab room for maneuver and Syria's diminishing centrality are proof of that.

Ma'ale Adumim To Be Linked to Jerusalem

TA0812192494 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 8 Dec 94 p 19

[Report by Yehuda Golan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Ilan Biran, commander of the Central Command, recently annexed some 3,000 dunams to Ma'ale Adumim. The area is located to the west of the town, and will link it to Jerusalem near the village of 'Isawiyah.

According to plans, a new residential neighborhood consisting of 1,500 housing units and 10 hotels with a total capacity of 4,000 rooms will be built in the new area (called E-1 in the blueprints).

The map depicting Ma'ale Adumim's new boundaries was recently signed by Gen. Biran and approved by Rabin.

The Giv'at Ze'ev local council recently submitted a similar plan to Gen. Biran to expand its jurisdiction from 22,000 to 40,000 dunams so that Giv'at Ze'ev, to the northwest of the capital, will in effect also link up with Jerusalem.

These two plans are of major importance on the eve of the negotiations about the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians.

Sha'ul Mizrahi, head of the Giv'at Ze'ev local council, said that a committee headed by Noah Kinarti, the prime minister's adviser on settlement affairs, is currently looking into the request to double the area of Giv'at Ze'ev and that approval is expected within approximately one month.

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West Bank Settlements Using Fence To Expand Area

TA1212074894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Settlements incorporated in the Samaria Regional Council are doubling their size by erecting fences, putting up street lights, and constructing new paths near the housing units. Arye 'Ofri, head of the Samaria Regional Council, told our settlement affairs correspondent Gil Litman that the new fencing work is being done according to law and on the basis of each settlement's master plan. He claims that this method is being implemented in the wake of the government's freeze on construction activity in the settlements. In several settlements, mobile homes have been placed in the fenced areas and hothouses have been constructed there.

Housing Planned on Expropriated Arab Land

TA1312104694 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 13 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Plans for massive Jewish housing construction between the new Shu'fat Ridge neighborhood and the 'Atarot industrial zone in northern Jerusalem have been formulated by the municipality, according to City Hall sources.

The area, annexed in 1967, is one of the largest pieces of undeveloped land in the city. Last summer, the 6,000 dunams (1,500 acres) of land were barred for development by residents of adjoining Shu'fat and Bayt Hanina.

At the time, it was charged that the city planned to expropriate the land, as it had done with areas to the east on which the neighborhoods of Pisgat Ze'ev and Neve Ya'aqov were built.

The plan, a map of which was obtained by the THE JERUSALEM POST, appears to confirm these fears.

"You know what a sandwich is? That's what's going to happen here. The Arab neighborhoods will be sandwiched by Jewish neighborhoods," said one source. He noted that the municipality has prevented the growth of Arab neighborhoods in other areas by building Jewish neighborhoods adjacent to them.

The map, compiled for the municipality by leading Jerusalem planner Yoram Gadish, shows the land taken out of jurisdiction of the two Arab neighborhoods as rezoned to allow for construction, but does not specify that it is to be used exclusively for Jewish development.

But the municipal sources said that the intent was clearly for Jewish development, largely housing.

"This doesn't surprise me at all," said Bayt Hanina community council chairman Muhammad Masri. "We all expected this to happen when we saw that they not only prevented us from building on the land, but also took it out of our jurisdiction."

"We are already being choked on the west by Pisgat Ze'e , now we are going to be choked from the other side," he said.

Outgoing city engineer Gadi Brandes declined to comment on the plan. He said he was not personally aware of it, but that it may have been considered by other officials.

The municipal sources also emphasized that the plan has yet to be adopted by City Hall, although its placement in city records means it is being taken seriously.

The start of construction, even if the plan is accepted, would take some time, the sources added. A lengthy rezoning process would be needed, and the government would have to initiate expropriation measures, as some of the land is owned by Arabs.

Such a process, however, is not unprecedented, with work expected to begin soon on the south Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa, on rezoned land largely expropriated from Arabs.

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Minister on Bids To Undermine Security, Democracy

JN1312105494 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 13 Dec 94 pp 1, 13

[Report by Faysal al-Shubul and Nabil Ghishan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Interior Minister Salamah Hammad has said that some countries and parties have wagered, and are still wagering, on the fact that security and democracy in Jordan will not last more than six months. Speaking to a number of Jordanian writers and journalists yesterday, the interior minister said that these countries and sides—which he did not identify—seek to undermine Jordan's security and to strike at its democracy, adding that a number of attempts were made to materialize this desire.

The interior minister noted that he raised this issue with the leaders of the Jordanian parties, which oppose the peace process. He added that he asked them to cooperate with the government in this delicate stage in which demonstrations and marches are not in the interest of the country because some elements would join them to carry out terrorist acts and undermine security. Hammad said that these are the reasons for banning demonstrations and marches, noting that he explained to the leaders of the parties that a wounded person is in hospital as a result of a terrorist act which took place in Amman recently. Minister Hammad stressed that the Interior Ministry's job is to implement laws and that the door of freedom and democracy will never be closed in Jordan.

Answering a question, Hammad said that Jordan has no problem regarding the issuing of Palestinian passports, which will be a major topic on the agenda of the Arab Interior Ministers Council to be held at the end of this month. He added that it is his pan-Arab duty to warn against the negative results of issuing such a passport, particularly to Palestinians working abroad. It was decided to issue Palestinian passports last September.

Minister Hammad said that Jordan has advised the Palestinians to refer the issue to the Arab interior ministers to ensure Arab recognition of the Palestinian passports so that the rights of a large number of Palestinians will not be lost. [passage omitted]

Students Protest Israeli Embassy Opening

JN1312093994 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Dec 94 p 3

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Rana al-Husayni]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Students at the University of Jordan Monday [12 December] staged a demonstration to protest the opening of the first Israeli embassy in the Kingdom.

Raising placards and black flags, more than 300 students chanted slogans and held banners condemning the peace process, normalisation with Israel and the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Jewish state. Some banners read: "Another manifestation of Zionist invasion which will be rejected by our people."

During the half-hour protest, students shouted "No to the embassy, no to normalisation." A group of male students burned two Israeli flags at the end of the protest," Muhammad Khuraysat, dean of student affairs at the University told the JORDAN TIMES.

"They (the students) are free to express their point of view," Dr. Khuraysat said.

Jordan and Israel Sunday formally opened embassies in Amman and Tel Aviv two weeks after establishing diplomatic relations ending 46 years of war between the two countries with the signing of the Oct. 26 peace treaty.

The peaceful demonstration, which was organised by the Student Union, came one day after the opening of the Israeli embassy, temporarily housed in a six-room suite of the Forte Grand Hotel, and weeks after His Majesty King Husayn warned the opposition not to pursue active opposition to the Kingdom's peace treaty with Israel.

King Husayn had said that any move to that effect "will not be tolerated" and that the minority has to accept the decision of the majority.

Jordan's opposition parties Sunday staged a sit-in-outside the Prime Ministry to protest the opening of the embassies.

The protesters described the day as a "black day in the history of our nation."

On Oct. 26, more than 3,000 university students marched in support of the peace treaty chanting slogans in support of King Husayn's policies and reaffirming their allegiance to the Hashemite Throne.

Joint Transport Committee Begins Dead Sea Meetings

JN1212180094 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Meetings of the Jordanian-Israeli Transport Committee began at the Dead Sea Hotel today to discuss various fields of investment in this sector, which has three pillars, land, air, and sea transport.

The meetings will last two days under Dr. Durayd Mahasinah, director general of the Ports Authority, for the Jordanian side, and (Schneller Etnel), director of the roads safety section at the Israeli Transportation Ministry, for the Israeli side. Here are further details:

During today's session, discussions focused on land transport such as small cars, tourist buses, and regular transport lines by buses between both countries. Dr. Mahasinah said discussions began on issues related to the permits for vehicles and drivers and recognizing these permits by both countries.

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He added that they also discussed the required procedures to insure the vehicles and individuals moving between the two countries, as well as the railway lines and future projects related to both countries' exports of the Dead Sea products and their exportation via the Port of al-'Aqabah. In the near future, studies will be conducted on working out criteria for such projects and their economic feasibility studies. A specialized technical committee from both countries will begin this work.

Regarding sea transportation, Dr. Mahasinah said discussions focused on giving the Port of al-'Aqabah a central role in sea transportation along with linking it to the land transportation of goods between both countries. He said that Jordan will benefit from this issue through its large experience in transit transport, due to its geographical position, and also from the great investment in this field.

Dr. Mahasinah also asserted that the Jordanian side's objective from these meetings is to preserve the investments in various transport fields by increasing the passengers and goods and activating the fleet of buses and trucks along with utilizing various lines of infrastructure in the Kingdom in terms of ports, airports, and roads as well as obtaining the greatest possible revenues.

Meetings will be held at the Dead Sea Hotel tomorrow for the committees of security, borders, territories, the environment, crimes, and drugs, in addition to the Transport Committee which began its meetings this morning.

Foreign Ministry Urges Syria To Appoint Ambassador

JN1312114494 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 14 Dec 94 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian Foreign Ministry is intensifying contacts with the Syrian Government to appoint an ambassador in the Kingdom after the Syrian Foreign Ministry froze the decision to appoint an ambassador for three consecutive months after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

Information indicates that the Jordanian Foreign Ministry told the Syrian Foreign Ministry that leaving the Syrian Embassy without an ambassador for this length of time is a violation of prevailing diplomatic norms and the diplomatic documents exchanged by both countries.

According to our sources, the Syrian response to the Jordanian remarks did not go beyond promises to study the issue and name the ambassador as soon as possible.

Paper Views ICO 'Dispute' Over Jerusalem Issue

JN1312084694 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 13 Dec 94 p 1

[Editorial: "Jerusalem....Jerusalem"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Differences over Jerusalem are the last thing the Islamic peoples can imagine or believe as true. Even if scores of disputed issues surface or emerge ahead of the leaders' summit meeting, Jerusalem should not be among them, firstly because it is the capital of all of them. Secondly, it is the first of the two kiblahs [direction to which Muslims turn when they pray], and thirdly, because it is the holy city that is threatened by all dangers.

Jordan has considered Jerusalem a top-priority issue. It has also declared on every occasion that Jerusalem is a dear trust with it. Jordan, however, has been eager not to turn it into a disputed issue. Jordan has always stressed that Jerusalem will be the responsibility of the Palestinian people and their national authority once an agreement regarding it has been reached. Therefore, Jordan will be alarmed if anyone seeks to turn holy Jerusalem into a political card or refuses to deal with it as a trust with the Jordanians and their Hashemite leadership. Such stands are in line with the Israeli policies which have been insistently reiterating that Jerusalem is Israel's unified and eternal capital.

Listing the issue of Jerusalem on the summit's [Islamic Conference Organization] agenda should have as its objective something important that should not be ignored by the Muslim leaders despite all their differences. It is their responsibility to underscore the Islamic character of Jerusalem and to stress that Jerusalem is part of the occupied Arab territories. They must do this lest we be accused of disregarding all stands and resolutions that call for the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation troops from Jerusalem in accordance with international legitimacy.

We hope that the dispute over Jerusalem was resolved yesterday prior to the Muslim leaders beginning their summit today. If Jerusalem is not on the agenda of these leaders, we will then ask: What issue can then be submitted and which summit other than the Islamic summit should discuss this issue?

Minister Questioned on 'Sale' of U.S. Entry Visas

JN1112105094 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 11 Dec 94 p 2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The House of Representatives will hold a session this evening under Speaker Engineer Sa'd Hayil al-Surur. During the session, the cabinet will reply to deputies' questions. The minister of state for foreign affairs will answer a question by deputy Bassam al-'Umush on the truth or otherwise of reports on the sale to Jordanian citizens of entry visas to the United States by U.S. Embassy employees or others from outside the embassy at a price that reached 4,000 dinars in some cases. [passage omitted]

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Sale of U.S. Visas Denied

JN1312121194 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 14 Dec 94 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Official sources at the Jordanian Foreign Ministry have denied recent rumors on the sale of entry visas to the United States.

The sources said that, in general, visas are granted according to the principle of reciprocity applied to missions accredited to the Royal Court. They said that the Ministry gives letters of reference to official and private delegations simply to facilitate the visa granting measures to these two categories and does not intervene except in humanitarian cases.

Information circulated recently among certain quarters said that Embassy employees and others are selling U.S. entry visas at a price ranging between $3,000 and $4,000.

Peace Stand Said To Lead to Senator's Resignation

JN1012100494 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 10 Dec 94 p 1

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Ghadir Tahir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Ahmad 'Ubaydat Thursday [8 December] resigned from the 40-member Senate a month after he said he opposed Jordan's peace treaty with Israel. A Royal Decree approved the resignation and named a fellow tribe member as replacement.

The prominent politician was replaced by a political opponent, former deputy and minister of labour Qasim 'Ubaydat, who held a parliament seat in the 1989 House but lost his bid for re-election in the country's last election.

Mr. 'Ubaydat's move was the second political resignation in less than one week. Deputy Prime Minister Dhuqan al-Hindawi resigned Monday from the government in protest against what he described as the government's lack of direction in domestic politics.

Mr. 'Ubaydat, a former prime minister, was asked to resign because of his harsh attacks on the peace accord with Israel, a highly informed source told the JORDAN TIMES.

His position on the peace accord and subsequent resignation came as a surprise because he is regarded as being very close to the leadership since he has held many key positions in the past including minister of interior and intelligence chief.

"When you are appointed to the Senate you are an advisor to the King... you are one of the King's men," said the source. "Of course he is entitled to his own views but 'Ubaydat went too far with his public criticism of the peace treaty."

Mr. 'Ubaydat, who belongs to a prominent tribe in the north of the country, made a speech in he Senate opposing the treaty ahead of the vote on the accord, Nov. 9.

At the time some members of the 'Ubaydat clan, led by Qasim 'Ubaydat, criticised the senator's position on the peace accord; they ran a full page advertisement in AL-RA'Y newspaper, signed by 650 members, pledging support to the King and for the peace treaty.

Mr. 'Ubaydat's supporters countered by issuing a statement that said his opposition to the peace accord focused on specific aspects of the treaty, water rights and Jerusalem, and reaffirmed their allegiance to the King and country.

Other senators suggested that Mr. 'Ubaydat may have been used by groups opposed to the treaty. They did not elaborate.

"It is sad to lose an honest and capable man in the Senate," said a fellow senator. "He should have been able to remain and defend his point of view."

Another senator attributed 'Ubaydat's inability to play the political game and remain within permissible bounds to his unbending character, which the colleague described as direct and uncompromising.

"Politics in Jordan is guided by certain conventions and parametres," said the senator. "Ahmad 'Ubaydat could not confine himself to these conventions or rules; this attitude was not tolerated," the senator told the JORDAN TIMES.

The senator said opponents of the treaty, whether on the right or left, will try to lure Mr. 'Ubaydat to their camp, especially since he is seen by many as opposing U.S. policies in the region.

" 'Ubaydat could become a focal point for the opposition," said the senator. "They need a charismatic leader, who is honest, decent and has credibility. The question is can he be a leader for the opposition despite past relations with them."

Tourism Minister Appointed Acting Foreign Minister

JN1112171994 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1520 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 11 Dec (PETRA)—A royal decree has been issued appointing Tourism and Antiquities Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Affash al-'Adwan acting foreign minister during the foreign minister's absence outside the country.

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Central Bank Intervenes To Prop Up Pound

NC0512125594 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 5 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Central Bank [CB] Governor Riyad Salamah has underlined the strength of the Lebanese pound. He said that the CB will continue its policy of ensuring the stability of the national currency and that he is ready to face any demand made on the pound and to defend it.

Now with colleague Sabah Ramadan on Beirut's money market condition today:

[Begin recording] [Ramadan] We can confirm that calm prevailed in Beirut's money market today. The CB has been intervening since early morning, buying and selling U.S. dollars at the rate of 1,656 pounds. Thus, the rate of exchange remained as it was when the market closed down last week. Despite the existing political situation and the prime minister's declared oral resignation, the financial situation has been governed by a wise policy that the CB has been following for some time, which is the policy of intervening in the money market whenever necessary. Thus, the intervention started when the resignation was announced and has continued up to the present, and the CB has succeeded in overcoming the attempt to raise the U.S. dollar's rate of exchange. [passage omitted]

[Wafiq 'Abbani] Reports said that the CB bought and sold $130 million. Are these reports true?

[Ramadan] We cannot indulge in a game of figures. There are no accurate figures about the transactions carried out by the CB. We cannot know the exact figure; and, to be honest with ourselves and with the people, we cannot indulge in a game of figures. The CB has enough reserves, around $4 billion, to intervene in the market when necessary. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Hizballah Official on Operations, Other Issues

JN1212191494 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1738 GMT 12 Dec 94

[Interview with Shaykh Na'im Qasim, assistant secretary general of Hizballah in Lebanon, by correspondent Salah Salamah; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Salamah] Shaykh Na'im Qasim, assistant secretary general of Hizballah in Lebanon, the resistance in southern Lebanon has escalated its operations against the Israeli occupation forces and their local followers in the occupied border strip on the occasion of U.S. Secretary of State Christopher's recent tour of the region. The situation further exacerbated with Robert Pelletreau's recent arrival in Beirut. The region also witnessed another exacerbation yesterday with the convocation of the Syrian-Lebanese summit between Presidents al-Asad and al-Hirawi. Has the resistance any specific objectives it seeks to achieve at this particular stage through this escalation?

[Qasim] We view the resistance operations as ongoing operations, whether U.S. envoys come or do not come to the region. This is so because our land is occupied, and we must fight with all our means to liberate this land. At times, operations intensify and at others they slow down. This depends on the circumstances on the ground and the military factors that become available to the hesitance men. This also depends on the movement and presence of the Israeli enemy in the south. Our operations do not depend on special political circumstances. So long as the land is occupied, resistance will continue to liberate it.

[Salamah] During Christopher's recent tour, agreement was reached to pursue contacts between the Israeli and Syrian ambassadors in Washington in the presence of military experts as of the beginning of next year. In light of this, it is possible that Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi's proposal to form a political and military committee with Israel to discuss the possibility of scheduling the withdrawal from southern Lebanon will materialize. Do you believe it is possible for negotiations and resistance operations in the south to continue in parallel without the resistance having an impact on these negotiations?

[Qasim] We have nothing to do with the details that are taking place within the framework of the negotiations because our objective is to liberate our land. If Israel unconditionally withdraws from southern Lebanon, this will be a victory for the resistance and not for the negotiations. As for discussing security arrangements, we reject this in part and parcel because Israel should be kept on tenterhooks and it is impermissible to give it security guarantees because it is an occupier and the occupier must unconditionally leave the land.

[Salamah] Your Eminence Na'im Qasim: The resistance is out to take out the infrastructure of the Israeli-sponsored militias in south Lebanon. A good many Hizballah officials recently gave these militiamen one of two choices: Death or penitence. Is there any amount of coordination between the Lebanese Government and resistance to work out the problem of the south Lebanese militia?

[Qasim] This subject was not raised with any quarters. However, we are in confrontation with an enemy. We do not want Lebanese citizens in the occupied strip to be used as a bargaining chip by Israel to advance its interests. We have often enough advised them to repent and become normal citizens. We gave them our word that, afterward, they need not fear for their safety. Israel is using them and does not care about them in the least. As long as they are taking Israel's side and serving it, we will pursue them until the end. They have a chance to repent, but they had better return to their kinsfolk and be quick about it. Then we will be together in the same trench against the Israeli enemy.

[Salamah] Top Israeli officials today issued dire threats of military action in south Lebanon. This is an indication of imminent attacks on south Lebanon. Do you

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think the Israelis will attack specific targets or do you expect a full-blown offensive?

[Qasim] Israeli strikes against specific targets are always in the cards; we expect nothing else from an army of occupation. A full-blown attack, however, would appear to be less likely in the present circumstances. Furthermore, the confusion Israel is facing inside occupied Palestine as it tries to cope with the intifadah and the painful blows dealt it by Palestinian resistance are hardly the kind of conditions under which it would be opportune to take such action. Reactions in some areas would be more than Israel could handle. We, therefore, expect Israeli attacks on a limited scale. Again, I should think Israel would steer clear of a full-blown offensive. The time is just not right for that.

[Salamah] Your Eminence Shaykh Na'im Qasim, Israel believes that Syria can use its influence to end resistance in southern Lebanon. From this premise, it calls on Syria to pressure Hizballah in particular to stop its military activities against the occupation. What is the Lebanese resistance' reply to these Israeli demands, which are repeated from time to time?

[Qasim] No one can ask any side whose land is occupied not to resist occupation. Syria has repeatedly said that it cannot prevent the Lebanese people from resisting the occupation. This is logical, and recognized by the law on human rights and all international, humanitarian, and legal laws. Therefore, Syria's stand is sound and it cannot be asked to prevent resistance to occupation, especially since this is a legitimate right for all sides.

[Salamah] Based on this legitimate right, the resistance is, of course, determined to pursue its operations against the occupation. In case an Israeli aggression is carried out, the ones who will pay the price are the citizens in southern Lebanon, taking into consideration the fragile security and living conditions of these citizens. So, has the resistance taken into consideration the issue of protecting the inhabitants in the south and of securing the pillars of steadfastness and confrontation of such aggressions?

[Qasim] We believe that the price which has been paid as a result of the previous Israeli aggressions against southern Lebanon is very dear, and the thing which reduced this price is the presence of the resistance. Otherwise, the occupation would have expanded further and the southerners' life would have been aggravated further. Aggression against citizens is part of the pressure. However, praise be to God, we and our people in southern Lebanon and western al-Biqa' are cohesive against the occupation. The loss which occurs in an honorable confrontation is much better than a comprehensive and overall occupation which moves freely on our Lebanese territory. Therefore, the responsibility of the state and the international community is to secure all the appropriate requirements to enable us to confront any difficulties which would result from this occupation, taking into consideration that we are currently suffering from the difficulties of this occupation itself, rather than from resistance activity. Resistance is in reaction to occupation. It is occupation that has to explain itself.

[Salamah] Your Excellency Shaykh Na'im Qasim: In the event of contacts and then negotiations resume between Syria and Lebanon on the one hand and Israel on the other, and supposing a timetable is worked out for an Israeli pullout from south Lebanon and the Western al-Biqa' and then from the Golan Heights, will you be prepared to end resistance once and for all in the south and in the al-Biqa'?

[Qasim] Resistance will not stop before the land is liberated. Let's wait until Israel withdraws and then we will see what happens. We will not discuss the future now. We are ranged against an army of occupation that should not be given any guarantees. This army of occupation is supposed to withdraw unconditionally. As long as occupation continues, so will resistance.

[Salamah] Thanks to Shaykh Na'im Qasim, assistant secretary general of Hizballah.

[Qasim] Thank you.

'Split' in Hizballah Over Religious Allegiances

MM1212144694 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Dec 94 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Political, Religious, and Financial Split in Lebanese Hizballah"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—After weeks of blazing tension inside the ranks of Lebanese Hizballah, the party's differences came out into the open yesterday. Signs of a split emerged when "Hizballah shaykhs" in al-Biqa' vehemently attacked Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah, the party's secretary general.

The attack came in a violent statement which observers considered a "declaration of war" from an influential group in the party against its current leadership.

It is worth mentioning that Lebanese Hizballah's differences revolve around four issues:

1. The pledge by the leadership, headed by Nasrallah, to be loyal to Supreme Iranian Guide 'Ali Khamene'i and its acceptance of him as the "guardian" of Muslims and as an "authority for the Shiites."

As is known, prominent Shiite leaders in Lebanon such as Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams-al-Din and Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah consider Khamene'i a political official, and they declare their allegiance to Ayatollah 'Ali Mohammad Sistani in al-Najaf, while other Shiite figures such as Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli and Shaykh Husayn al-Musawi favor Ayatollah Huseyn 'Ali Montazeri in Qom.

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2. Two groups inside Hizballah, among them the "al-Biqa' shaykhs," are opposed to the party's participation in the political cycle in Lebanon, especially its participation in the recent elections.

3. The leadership constantly refuses to publish the party's financial records. The conflicting groups inside the party allege that the leadership is spending huge sums of Iranian money on promoting Iranian political and religious affairs, instead of spending them on helping the party.

4. The party's Central Committee—23 members—has not convened even once since March 1992, and the leadership replaced these meetings with regular meetings with officials in the Iranian embassies in Beirut and Damascus.

In a step reflecting the signs of a split inside the party, a statement issued yesterday by "Hizballah shaykhs in al-Biqa'" vehemently attacked Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah. The statement, a copy of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT's bureau in Beirut has received, criticized "the party's participation in the recent parliamentary election and Nasrallah's attempts to exploit religion for the sake of politics and to pawn Shiite rules and principles with foreign elements and with a foreign authority that has nothing to do with Arabism." In a reference to handing Shiite authority to Ayatollah Khamene'i, the Iranian republic's guide, the statement said that "allowing that Iranian authority to be in control even of our religious rites and spiritual leadership is a serious and sinister action."

It wondered: "Has Hizballah's well dried up? Have its senior clerics disappeared, that you rush to impose foreign authorities?

The statement cited Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah's positions in this connection. "He is trying to explain that the issue is to do with religion, through which we possess power and dignity. And he spares no effort to spread the light of guidance, revive Islam, and rehabilitate Arab spiritual and religious authorities." The statement asked: "Why are you working to silence him and to put—secretly and publicly—obstacles in his way to stop him from performing his mission?."

The statement said that he—namely, Fadlallah—is worthy of becoming an authority for the Shiites.

The statement accused Nasrallah of exploiting the party's budget and funds to support establishments belonging to him personally. The statement accused him of "abandoning Imam al-Sadr's line and the living formula in which he believed and for the sake of which he made sacrifices." The statement said that Nasrallah "preferred to opt for political performance by dealing with a government whose position proceeds from a sectarian mentality and which is characterized by political backwardness."

The statement asked Nasrallah: What have you done for the prisoners and detainees held in Israeli jails, first and foremost Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd and Hajj Mustafa al-Dirani? The statement urged him to "stop spreading the poisons of disunion among the sons of one people and one religion."

In Tehran, Iranian sources said yesterday that the Iranian Government could send a special envoy to Beirut to persuade the conflicting factions in Hizballah to settle their differences as soon as possible.

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Al-Shar' on 'Terrorism' Charges, Israel's Policy

NC1112071994 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2325 GMT 10 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 10 Dec (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has affirmed that all terrorism charges against Syria are baseless. He said Israel is behind these charges to pressure Syria into giving concessions and to harm Syrian-U.S. relations.

In an interview with AL-WAFD on Sunday, al-Shar' said Israel's insistence on its stances shows that it does not seek peace but hegemony. He asserted that Syria clings to all its rights and will reject any Israeli attempts for political, economic, and military domination.

He denied that military experts from Syria and Israel have been attached to the Washington talks to discuss security arrangements. He noted that no progress has been made in these talks to prompt the negotiators to discuss security arrangements.

Al-Shar' affirmed Syria's rejection of any leadership-level meeting with Israel, and asked: How can this happen while Israel occupies our land?

The Syrian foreign minister said Israel wants to disarm the Arabs and weaken them to a point where it will remain the sole regional power dominating all the region's states, including those who have established peace with it.

He noted that Israel has enormous stocks of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, in addition to weapons of mass destruction.

Khaddam Comments on Peace, Regional Stability

NC1212160894 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 10 Dec 94 pp 22-24

[Interview with Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam by Sana' al-Sa'id in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Sa'id] Should we not take into account the possibility of war if Israel keeps the Golan?

[Khaddam] It is natural that there will be no peace in the region if Israel does not withdraw from the Golan. There will be no stability if there is no peace. This applies not only to the Arab situation but also to the regional and international ones. The issue of peace is not only a regional necessity but an international one too; hence, the international community has to shoulder its responsibility of exerting pressure on Israel to make it return to the right path, the path of peace that is principally based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

If Rabin is hinting at the possibility of renewed war, no one can blackmail us that way. Syria will remain as it was in the past and as it is in the present. We will not relinquish a single inch of territory or a single iota of dignity. Therefore, the threat of war can not affect the Syrian stand's principles or factors.

[Al-Sa'id] During his recent visit to Washington and his meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton, Rabin sought to focus on military and technological support for Israel, including the transfer of sensitive technology to Israel, so that it is treated like the NATO countries. Has Israel also been supplied with advanced computers?

[Khaddam] The Zionist movement has in fact not changed its objectives—that is, the establishment of an Israeli empire that controls the region and its resources. Naturally, it has changed its tactics but has not changed its strategy. The tactics have been changed according to the international changes that are taking place and have in fact taken place for years. Their objectives remain constant, namely to control the region and its resources and establish an Israeli state able to impose hegemony and control. That is why they are manufacturing and importing weapons and arming to the teeth, as you said. I ask at whom are these weapons pointed? Of course, they are pointed at the Arabs. We hope that our brothers in the Arab countries will take these facts into account. If Israel really wants peace, as some of its leaders are claiming, then what is this peace going to be like? Israel concluded peace with Egypt. As we know, Egypt is a major Arab country and was Syria's partner in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The size of the Israeli armed forces were supposed to be reduced in proportion to the reduction in Egyptian military pressure. But we found that the Israeli military accelerated its arms buildup several fold. Therefore, the issue is not linked to peace but to the Zionist strategy of expansion.

[Al-Sa'id] Could not armed might be a factor that enables Israel to wrest concessions from the Arab states, as it did on the Palestinian and Jordanian fronts?

[Khaddam] These weapons are not for wresting concessions but for expansion, to protect Israeli interests, and to expand and create new Israeli interests.

[Al-Sa'id] Is Israel still saying that in order to reach peace there must be a complete package that includes withdrawal from the Golan, a timetable for the withdrawal, full normalization after the first stage of withdrawal, and determining the security arrangements after reaching peace?

[Khaddam] We are not looking for the Israeli peace. The peace wanted by Israel is not the one we want. We want a just and equitable peace that we can protect and defend. A peace that is based on inequalities or which serves the interests of only one party cannot survive. History provides many examples of this. We see before us the Oslo agreement, which was not between two equal parties. Of course, what we said about the Oslo Agreement then has today proved to be correct. Hence, the Israeli proposals are meant for an Israeli peace through wh ch Israel wants to impose its policy and interests, not only on Syria but also on the region as a whole. The Syrians cannot accept this. We want peace in accordance with the two Security Council resolutions and the U.S.

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initiative. We believe that this type of peace is the only one that can survive and become stable.

[Al-Sa'id] When Rabin was asked about international legitimacy's Resolutions 242 and 338, which Israel has not implemented so far, he said that Israel had started to implement and is implementing the aforementioned resolutions, but according to the U.S. interpretation, which is withdrawal from some territories but not withdrawal from all the territories.

[Khaddam] The Security Council resolution is clear on the inadmissibility of seizing territories by force. Keeping an inch of territory is rewarding the aggressor. Keeping an inch is seed for new wars in the region. Hence the withdrawal must be comprehensive. The U.S., British, or any other interpretation is unacceptable. Additionally, we possess a U.S. letter clearly stating that the United States does not approve of the annexation of one inch of the Golan to Israel.

[Al-Sa'id] Following the Jordanian-Israeli agreement, it was said that it undermined or reduced the opportunities for achieving real progress on the Syrian track. What is your view?

[Khaddam] If the world wants peace in the region, then the United States knows that that peace has to be with Syria and not with someone else. The wars that were fought in the region were between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other. Peace is made between combatants. As for the others, we all know their stands during these wars. Egypt and Syria were the ones that shouldered the burdens of the Arab-Israeli conflict and were the ones that made the great sacrifices, not only with their sons' blood but also with their livelihoods. I do not think that Israel has at any time had any worries about threats to its security and position from Jordan. But Israel fought two Arab countries—Egypt and Syria. Peace is meant to be between the combatants. The others' actions have nothing to do with war.

[Al-Sa'id] In his comparison of the Golan and the Sinai, from which Israel has withdrawn, Rabin has stated that the border area of the Sinai is approximately 250 km in depth, which represents an adequate geographical depth so it does not represent a threat for Israel. As for the Golan, its small area does not provide such depth and thus could become a threat to Israel, particularly since Israel claims that Syria used to fire at kindergartens and dining halls.

[Khaddam] At any rate, these Israeli allegations and statements cannot be taken seriously. Secondly [as published], withdrawal is withdrawal; and so long as there is peace, why be afraid? Thirdly, the Arabs are the ones who should be afraid. Israel is manufacturing weapons and has nuclear, germ, and chemical weapons. It manufactures missiles, aircraft, and tanks and has a strategic agreement with the United States. So, who should be afraid: Israel or us? The Arab states are the ones who should be strict about establishing a secure situation. This is because danger, should there be any future danger following the peace agreements, will come from Israel and not from the Arab states. So, such arguments by Rabin or others are doubtful. And how could there be peace if we remain so cautious? This caution means that Israel does not have serious intentions to establish a stable peace in the region.

[Al-Sa'id] Rabin has stressed that U.S. backing facilitated Israel's policies, strengthened its positions, and compelled the Arabs to recognize its existence and persuaded them that it is better to live in peace and not make war with Israel. Had Israel been weak, it would not have been guaranteed or certain that the Arab rulers would make peace with it.

[Khaddam] The U.S. backing is not new; it has continued for many years. Had the United States not backed Israel, the picture of the entire region would have been completely different. Besides, the Arab world was not what it is at present. It is a matter of history and geography; and the course of history cannot be determined by a specific period, such as the current state of Arab disintegration and splits. Thirdly, I do not believe that the Arab world will accept the advise: Go to Israel so that you can avoid Israeli blows. The Arabs are a dignified people with resources and capabilities. Nobody will dictate anything to it. Even though certain conditions prevail now, I do not believe that they will last forever. The Arab history is replete with numerous examples and events.

[Al-Sa'id] Does Syria expect to be included in the U.S. aid program when peace is achieved?

[Khaddam] I recently heard statements by a congressman, Republican Congressman Helms [title as published], that the Syrians' eyes are on U.S. funds. He knows—or he should know—that Syria has not taken a single cent, either from the U.S. Treasury or from the U.S. taxpayers and its eyes are not on the funds of others but on its own resources and capabilities. Our own capabilities are our foundation. Therefore when we say we want to have good relations with this or that country, it is not because we covet its resources and seek to be under its wing. We want our relations with all countries to be balanced and good. We have nothing to offer, either from among our rights or our interests, in order to attain this. Relations between any country and another should be on the basis of equality. The issue has nothing to do with countries' sizes. The smaller the countries are, the greater their sense of national dignity is. No one believes that Syria is seeking relations with any country at the expense of its interests or national dignity.

[Al-Sa'id] Israel is trying to pull Lebanon into a separate peaceful agreement through its repeated proposals to form a joint military committee between the two countries.

[Khaddam] There is in fact an agreement between Syria and Lebanon to abide by a comprehensive solution.

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Since the others have broken away and ceased coordination, a comprehensive solution now means Syria and Lebanon. Hence, Syria cannot come to an agreement with Israel if it is not accompanied by an agreement between Lebanon and Israel. Lebanon also follows the same policy. All the Israeli efforts to separate the two tracks have failed. I believe that all the parties that play a part in the peace negotiations now realize the impossibility of separating the two countries' tracks.

[Al-Sa'id] Israel has many reservations about your relations with Iran, especially because Hizballah and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] have links with it. It takes this as evidence of your backing for the two movements and makes it, together with your failure to denounce terrorism, a main condition for peace?

[Khaddam] The main condition for peace is recognition of rights. No one can tell the Lebanese or Palestinians: capitulate and do not resist the occupation. Those who regard the person resisting the occupation as a terrorist have to review the history of World War II. Resistance in France and Western Europe was active and effective. The resistance fighters in Europe killed hundreds of the German occupation forces. If these were terrorists, then the Europeans have to rewrite history.

If we go back to the American Revolution itself and recall its events, we find that the Americans killed hundreds and even thousands of Englishmen—not in face to face fighting but in resistance operations.

When the issue is one of occupation and territory, resistance is a legitimate process provided for in the UN Charter and international law. As for our relations with Iran, it is a Muslim country and a neighbor of the Arab world. Iran and the Arab world have eight centuries of common history. No one can erase history. If the world is asking the Arabs to make peace with Israel, how can it ask for war against Iran? Our relations with Iran are good and continuing; and no one can advise us on our relations with any country.

[Al-Sa'id] Israel claims that Syria and Iran are building a Scud-C missile and that North Korea is supplying them with the technology that could enable them to manufacture it on their own.

[Khaddam] If we were to respond to everything that the Israelis say we would not do anything else, and the tape recorder would have to remain in front of us 24 hours per day.

[Al-Sa'id] Rabin follows a theory that says that any nuclear ban should come after peace is achieved, it should take the form of bilateral agreements with each country, and that supervision should be on bilateral basis and not by the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], which he does not recognize.

[Khaddam] We and Egypt are in agreement on this issue and there is coordination between the two governments. Undoubtedly the Israeli take an obstructive position on the issue of establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in this part of the world. What is a source of bewilderment is the international position and the position of the IAEA. North Korea has not publicly announced that it has nuclear weapons, yet measures are being taken against it. In the meantime, the West itself is saying that Israel possesses a large quantity of nuclear weapons, but nobody is doing anything about it. Instead, Israel is being supplied with the material needed to build nuclear weapons on the one hand and produce nuclear energy on the other.

[Al-Sa'id] What is the nature of the relationship between normalization and withdrawal, in Damascus' view?

[Khaddam] Normalization, or peaceful relations, is a matter that depends on [murtabit] withdrawal. Any measures that disregard the Israeli occupation cannot be accepted. How could we accept normal or peaceful relations while Israeli soldiers remain on our territory? The peace process is a complicated process, but its main component is withdrawal. There are other components, each of which requires negotiations. Naturally, nobody negotiates in front of the media. The United States is trying to find a way to make progress through Warren Christopher's tours. So far, the obstacle to progress is the Israeli position. When the U.S. side manages to make progress with the Israeli position it will undoubtedly find readiness on Syria's part to make progress. Our ideas are clear and are known to the Americans.

[Al-Sa'id] So Israel must show goodwill and announce a full withdrawal from the Golan?

[Khaddam] A withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders, without us relinquishing a single inch. This is because everybody must know that the aggressor, no matter how long it takes us, cannot seize part of our territory or make any gains.

[Al-Sa'id] And Israel too is required to provide equal security arrangements so that the demilitarized territories on both sides are equal?

[Khaddam] This is also a basic issue. We approve of the security arrangements, provided they are equal and balanced on both sides of the border. This means that any measure to be taken on the Syrian land must be reciprocated in the same magnitude and kind on the other side.

[Al-Sa'id] Do you approve of deploying U.S. troops on the Golan?

[Khaddam] This subject has not yet been discussed, It is still premature to talk about it. We will get to these matters when we discuss the question of security arrangements.

[Al-Sa'id] There is a difficult issue involved, that of the settlements now present on the Golan.

[Khaddam] Not a single Israeli soldier or citizen can be permitted on the Golan. Israel made a big fuss when it

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talked about the Syrian Jews and demanded they be allowed to leave Syria. So why does it demand the departure of Syrian Jews, who have been in the country for hundreds of years, and then wish to bring Israelis to Syria once again? It has raised these matters for extortion purposes. It knows very well that not a single settler will be acceptable on Syria territory. We will not accept any traces of the Israeli occupation or its vestiges in the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

[Al-Sa'id] Concerning the settlements, Israel has proposed that the settlements be under Syrian sovereignty while settlers remain on the Golan.

[Khaddam] In his press conference in Cairo, President Hafiz al- Asad said: Leasing territory is blasphemy. President Mubarak added that land is honor. We are neither prepared to commit blasphemy nor relinquish our honor.

[Al-Sa'id] It is being said that Israel has shown flexibility toward Syria's interests in Lebanon. Officials have stated that Syria's aspiration to stay in Lebanon is something that Israel takes into consideration even if a peace agreement is signed. Could not there be a bargain with Syria so that Israel can keep parts of the Golan in return?

[Khaddam] I find it very strange for the Israelis or non-Israelis to think of this. Our interests in Lebanon are joint interests with the Lebanese people. There are common interests in Syria between Lebanon and Syria and similar interests in Lebanon. We are two sisterly Arab countries. Israel is a country that has carried out aggression against Syria, Lebanon, and the Arab nation. Another thing: Could anybody imagine that Syria would agree to relinquish a single iota of Syrian territory? So, such statements must be given no attention. In addition, our presence or absence in Lebanon is not something that requires permission from Israel or anyone else. The ties between us and Lebanon are organized by our two states, regardless of any other country.

[Al-Sa'id] It is said that the United States agrees with you on the peace process and that there could be a rift between the United States and Israel. But what is happening is that the United States is not exerting pressure on Israel.

[Khaddam] Anyhow, we feel that the United States is making serious efforts to reach a comprehensive peace in the region. As for whether they are exerting pressure on Israel or not, that is their affair. There are factors and prerequisites for peace. The mediator tries to provide these factors and prerequisites. We hope that the U.S. side will succeed in doing so.

[Al-Sa'id] On what is Syria wagering by not speeding up its peace process with Israel?

[Khaddam] The issue is in fact not one of accelerating or delaying but one of rights. If we can attain these rights today, then we are ready for peace. The time factor is important only as it pertains to seeing that our rights are attained. But it is an unimportant factor if our rights are not guaranteed.

[Al-Sa'id] This means that Syria will not relinquish anything if it is required to concede even an inch of its soil in order to speed things up?

[Khaddam] That is correct. Why should we hasten and relinquish our territories for the sake of a little or a lot of time?

[Al-Sa'id] It was said in the wake of the Jordanian-Israeli agreement that Egypt and Syria are the two countries that will be most damaged by this agreement.

[Khaddam] We should not look at the Israeli-Jordanian treaty as a race between Jordan and Israel on one hand and this or that Arab country on the other. It should be looked at in a different way. It should be looked at as an Israeli action to reach out and control the Arab world's resources. Consequently, it is peaceful aggression and this should be confronted with serious joint Arab action. Egypt's and Syria's agreement on an Arab action strategy is undoubtedly an catalyst in the Arab situation. We all know that when Egypt and Syria agree, many things in the Arab world change. We all know that the climax of pan-Arab steadfastness was reached with the establishment of unity between Egypt and Syria. There is a struggle in the region between Israel and us. If we understand that what we face is a struggle and work to provide what is needed to protect the Arab nation from this bogey that aims to control the region and its resources, then we can say that we have succeeded in ensuring the nation's interests as a whole and our interests as parts of this nation.

[Al-Sa'id] How do you view Egypt's attempt to join the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU]?

[Khaddam] I do not believe that the Egyptian Government's objective, judged by its declaration of its desire to join the AMU, is to move away from the Arab east and its problems. Egypt is at the heart of the Arab world and cannot give that up. I do not believe that it wants to do so. President Mubarak is fully aware of Egypt's role and its role as an Arab county. I do not want to give a negative interpretation of this declaration. We believe that the Arab Maghreb should be concerned with the problems of the east. The Arab east should also be concerned with the problems of the Arab Maghreb. We should regard any development in Mauritania as having either a positive or a negative effect on Yemen.

We should look at the Arab world as a whole, as a complete unit regardless of the existing negative conditions in Arab relations. Therefore I believe that we all have to think objectively of how to confront this new situation.

I do not believe that the Israelis will succeed with such plans as a Middle East market. The objective there is clear—namely, to grasp the region's wealth on the one

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hand and to erase the Arab identity on the other, that is, to obliterate everything Arab, erase the word "Arabism" and the Arabs from human memory and tongue. This cannot succeed. No one can erase either the Arab identity or Arab interests. They might achieve some temporary and immediate successes, but things will be much different later.

Khaddam, al-Zu'bi Address Secretaries, Governors

JN1112111594 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 7 Nov 94 pp 1, 11

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus (SANA)—The comrade party branch secretaries and governors resumed their meetings yesterday under comrade Dr. Sulayman Qaddah, assistant regional secretary of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party. [passage omitted]

During this session, Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam presented a comprehensive political review which covered recent developments on the Arab and international levels and their impact on Arab interests and main issues. He also referred to the dangers of the existing state of Arab disunity and the failure to abide by Arab summit resolutions.

Comrade Khaddam also dealt with the peace process, including what is taking place in the Palestinian arena and the Palestinian people's disappointment over the concessions which some Palestinian leaders have made to Israel, thereby giving it big gains at the expense of Palestinian national rights. The comrade vice president also explained the dangers of sliding into separate agreements, such as the Jordanian-Israeli agreement.

Comrade Khaddam reviewed the latest developments in the context of the peace process and the talks which U.S. President Bill Clinton held with President Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus during which the president underscored Syria's firm policy vis-a-vis the peace process, objective demands, and continuous commitment to it on the basis of international legitimacy, the UN Security Council Resolutions, and Israel's complete withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 border line and from all the occupied Lebanese territories.

Comrade Khaddam then explained Syria's role in the current phase under the leadership of the party secretary general, comrade leader Hafiz al-Asad, and also its pivotal role which is the subject of appreciation and respect on the regional and international levels.

Following his political review, comrade Khaddam answered the questions and queries of the comrade conferees. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister comrade Mahmud al-Zu'bi then presented a comprehensive and broad review of the economic and services issues. He explained the nature of the policies, measures, and steps which are being taken to tackle national economic issues in the agricultural, industrial, and other productive and services fields. He explained with facts and figures the importance of what has been achieved in the economic field under the wise guidance of comrade struggler Hafiz al-Asad. He affirmed that the work will continue to carry out the president's directives in order to achieve the required economic advancement. [passage omitted]

The comrade regional secretary then concluded the meeting, affirming that the proposals and recommendations which have been made by the comrade party secretaries and governors will be considered by the Regional Command. [passage omitted]

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Afghanistan

'Unnecessary' Kabul Security Posts To Be Removed

LD1112200994 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In line with the operation to remove unnecessary security posts and hideouts from Kabul city, unnecessary hideouts were also cleared today from some parts of Chendawol, Cinema-e Pamir, and the first section of Jada-e Maywand.

A Bakhtar Information Agency military correspondent reports: With the joint efforts of the commanders in the area and the service personnel of Kabul municipality who possessed equipment, the officials of the [Kabul City] Security Commission [KCSC] began this morning to remove and destroy more than 50 unnecessary security posts and positions that were located in the central part of Chendawol and in Bagh-e Ghazi, Cinema-e Behzad, the first section of Jada-e Maywand, and Abnacena Hospital.

Brigadier General Mohammad Zaher Anwar, security protection commander of national security and a member of the KCSC, was in charge of today's operation and the organization of the KCSC. The representatives of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] and Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] and the commanders of the area also took part.

In an interview, Commander Tehar Rezai from Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami and Cmdr. Sanger from Harakat-e Eslami said: Now that the KCSC has been formed and most of the unnecessary hideouts and positions in Kabul city have been destroyed, there is no need to build and protect hideouts in the Chendawol area. Therefore, we have cooperated with the KCSC in order to destroy these positions and to prepare the ground for the peaceful life for our people.

A BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY correspondent who saw today's operation by the KCSC writes: Many months were needed to build hideouts and positions, but it took only a few hours to destroy them in order to ensure peace. Those people who have been building hideouts and positions have now realized the need for peace and are resorting to destroying their own positions.

Esteemed Brig. Gen. Mohammad Zaher Akbar said: Realizing its responsibility toward ensuring security in Kabul city, since its formation the KCSC has carried out noticeable work successfully to ensure security in Kabul city. It hopes to bring safe security to the long-suffering citizens. We have achieved progress through talks and negotiations that could not be achieved through war. Our activities will continue in this direction with help of God.

Ghazni Jehadi Shura To Keep Weapons From Taleban

LD0912192194 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 9 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jehadi Shura of Ghazni Province has issued a resolution declaring it's stance vis-a-vis the group of Taleban [religious students] who are now controlling Kandahar Province. A source of [words indistinct] Ghazni Province said that the four-article resolution was approved unanimously.

The resolution says in part: The Jehadi Shura, Ghazni Province, is not ready, under any circumstances, to hand over their weapons to the Taleban group. The mojahedin of Ghazni will keep their weapons so as to maintain security and enforce Shara'i rules.

The resolution further says that all government posts in Ghazni Province have been distributed to the Jehadi formations, and the personnel of each party have all occupied their posts. Because of this, tension would be created if attempting to find posts for Taleban in the administrative structure of Ghazni Province.

'Afghan Arabs' Killed; Prisoners Held by Rabbani

MM1212161594 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by Amir Taheri: "Five 'Afghan Arabs' Fighting Alongside Hekmatyar Killed. Saudi, Yemeni Prisoners Held By Rabbani Forces in Kabul"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—Official sources confirmed yesterday that a number of so-called "Afghan Arabs" were killed or captured by Afghan Government forces in the recent clashes with forces loyal to former Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar.

Ahmad Wali, spokesman for the Afghan Government, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that at least five "Afghan Arabs" were killed. But he declined to disclose the number of prisoners, because the government's policy is not to reveal the number of prisoners captured by it from "the other side."

However, he said that the captured Arabs are from Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, and Jordan.

He added that Kabul still has not received any request from the Arab governments concerned for the extradition of their citizens. A number of Pakistanis were also captured, and their government has requested their extradition.

Sources in Kabul told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that the latest fierce fighting between Hekmatyar's forces and President Borhanoddin Rabbani's forces took place in Helmand Province in southwest Afghanistan.

Hekmatyar's forces seized the province in 1992 with the help of at least 200 "Afghan Arabs." But government

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forces attacked the province last week with the help of "the student wing" [janah al-tullab] formed in Qandahar, seizing the city and capturing the commander of Hekmatyar's forces, whom they have moved to Kabul.

Sources have conveyed information from Western intelligence to the effect that some 3,000 Afghan Arabs are still in Afghanistan, but most of them are no longer participating among mojahedin factions in the fighting, and maybe they are living a normal life in safe areas like Jalalabad. As for most of "the active Afghan Arabs," they are linked to the fundamentalist Hezb-e Eslami led by Hekmatyar.

Hezb-e Eslami Military Issues Behavioral Rules

LD0912203494 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 9 Dec 94

[Statement released by the Military Command of the Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan and the Department of Sepah-e Nur; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] All shopkeepers, restaurant owners, and noble people of Charasiab are hereby informed to observe the following points, issued so as to ensure the community conforms to the principles of the sacred religion of Islam.

1. All shopkeepers, restaurant owners and those who have business in the Charasiab market, must cease business at the time of prayer and go to a mosque to offer prayers.

2. Playing music in hotels, shops and in motor vehicles is strictly prohibited.

3. People must refrain from using narcotic substances such as hashish and other intoxicating substances.

4. All Muslim sisters must wear Islamic dress and refrain from aimless walking and wandering.

5. All residents and individuals living in areas under the control of the Shura-e Hezb-e Eslami must refrain from dealing with 5,000 and 10,000 afghani banknotes.

Those who violate these instructions will be severely punished.

Chief Justice To Act in Absence of President

LD1212182794 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Quoting the Presidential Press Office, the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY reports: In accordance with a decree issued by esteemed professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA], Esteemed Mowlawi Mohammad Shah Fazli, chief justice and president of the Supreme Court will be acting in absence of the president of the ISA.

New Price List of Essential Commodities Issued

LD1212183294 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In order to prevent the increasing high prices and determine the prices of the essential commodities, the Kabul City Security Commission [KCSC] held a joint meeting this morning with the Kabul mayor, the heads of trade unions, and heads of the Price Control and Price Inspection Departments of Kabul municipality.

It was decided at the meeting that all the various categories of tradesmen are duty bound to observe the new price list. In the new price list issued by KCSC and Kabul municipality, the price of one kilogram of mutton is 4,500 afghanis; one kilogram of beef is 3,500 afghanis, one man [unit of weight equal to around 7 kilograms] of onions 3,000 afghanis, and one man potatoes 1,800 afghanis, one kilogram of best quality cookies 3,000; one kilogram of standard quality cookies 2,500 afghanis, and a loaf of bread weighing 160 grams is 200 afghanis.

In order to implement and control the new price list, esteemed Lieutenant General Mohammad Taher, head of the special order of the Defense Ministry and a member of the commission; esteemed Lieutenant General Baba Jan, acting commander of the General Command of Kabul Garrison and a member of the commission; esteemed Brigade General Gholam Bahaudin, security commander of Kabul Province and a member of the commission; esteemed Brigade General Khan Mohammad, head [word indistinct] of army and a member of the commission, and [name indistinct], head of trades union and [name indistinct], head of price control department of Kabul municipality were commissioned to (?supervise) the implementation of the price list, [passage indistinct].

India

First Official Visit From New Sri Lankan Government

Kadirgamar: Talks To Resume With LTTE

BK0812050494 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 8 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sri Lankan Government is to resume talks with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to resolve the 10-year old ethnic conflict in the island nation. This was conveyed to Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao by the visiting foreign minister, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, in New Delhi.

Mr. Kadirgamar is the first high-ranking Sri Lankan minister to visit India since Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike-Kumaratunga took over as president. An official spokesman said Mr. Rao has expressed hope that peace would soon return to Sri Lanka which has suffered from violence for so long.

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Mr. Kadirgamar also called on the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, and the external affairs minister, Mr. Dinesh Singh. He is on a four-day visit to New Delhi as part of Sri Lanka's efforts to strengthen relations with the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] countries.

Meanwhile, the state broadcasting corporation has announced the government's intention to reopen the Elephant Pass, the only land route connecting the mainland with Jaffna peninsula, which remained closed for civilian traffic since 1983.

Sri Lanka Stresses Preferential Trade

BK1112070694 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sri Lanka is considering a preferential trade arrangement with India. Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, on a visit to New Delhi, said yesterday that such an arrangement could offer incentives to attract Indian investment.

Mr. Kadirgamar, on the first visit to India by a senior member of the PA [People's Alliance] administration, hoped that preferential trade could be adopted by other countries in the region. Minister Kadirgamar said after meeting Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao that the stalemate on a SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] preferential trade agreement could be welcomed even if two nations in the seven-member association agreed on preferential trade.

The minister, who was on the last day of a four-day visit, said that Sri Lanka was keen to attract and hold Indian capital. According to the minister, there are seven or eight joint ventures already on course.

Press Reviews Election Results, Consequences

'Ominous' Outcome Viewed

BK1212121394 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 12 Dec 94 p 8

[Editorial: "Lame-Duck Regime"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The disconcerting realisation that it is easier to win elections than secure an extension of the mandate is calculated to cripple the Narasimha Rao Government in the final year of its present term. The sheer scale of the Congress defeat in Andhra Pradesh [A.P.] and Karnataka will, doubtless, be conveniently attributed to local factors, notably the indifferent performance of the state governments and rampant factionalism. But these facile explanations serve to divert attention from some of the more ominous facets of the anti-establishment wave. First, the victory of the Telugu Desam in A.P. and, to a lesser extent, the Janata Dal in Karnataka, are pointers to the enduring appeal of populism. If the promise of subsidised rice and total prohibition can contribute to a staggering 15 per cent swing away from the Congress, the Rao Government cannot but be alarmed. It prompts the stark conclusion that the electorate believes that economic liberalisation offers them few returns. Nor is this feeling confined to the less-developed regions of the country. The verdict in Karnataka—a state that is urbanised, industrialised and very modern—suggests that even the substantive beneficiaries of the reforms are unwilling to be swayed by cold economic logic alone.

Arguably, the fault lies in the Prime Minister's marketing strategy. By overemphasising the extent of overseas approval for the reforms, Mr Rao unwittingly conveyed an impression that the future of the country is dependent on moneybags in Washington, London and Singapore. This perennial search for certificates from foreigners seems to have offended the innate, patriotic self-respect of voters who must have wondered why burgeoning foreign exchange reserves and full granaries negate the viability of food subsidies. In projecting the Congress as a responsible party that avoids extravagant promises, Mr Rao ended up conveying the impression that he lacked compassion. Such an impression was also bolstered by the Congress's casual approach to corruption.

Indeed, a salutary feature of last week's verdict in all the states is that it demolishes the self-serving belief that corruption is a non-issue, Mr S. Bangarappa may have ruined the Congress's prospects in countless constituencies. But the fact remains that he was totally rejected by the voters despite his lavish show of money power. In a similar vein, the victory of the Sikkim Democratic Front demonstrates the extent to which voters still yearn for a government committed to a modicum of decency. Even the BJP's impressive showing in southern Karnataka can be attributed to this phenomenon. For Mr Rao and, for that matter, Mr Sharad Pawar, who have demonstrated a startling indifference to the problem of corruption, this aspect of the verdict should be particularly disturbing.

The next few weeks will be devoted to a rigorous postmortem of the results. With four Assembly elections due in February and Lok Sabha elections scheduled for early-1996, the Prime Minister will be in a desperate hurry to salvage the situation. Time is certainly not on his side, although there is unlikely to be any immediate challenge to his leadership. He can hardly turn his back on the economic reforms. Such a regression would not only be disastrous for India, it would involve the Congress falling between two stools. At the same time, his diminished authority and renewed dissident activity are hardly conducive to a burst of radical restructuring. Nor for that matter is heady populism on the agenda since that would entail undermining the foundations of the reforms programme. Realistically, Mr Rao has three options. First, to dispel the notion that his Government is only concerned with the well-being of the rich and powerful. This entails toning up the delivery systems of existing welfare programmes and coming down hard on corruption. Secondly, to allow the Opposition parties to

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blunder and capitalise on their lapses. However, if this degenerates into a violation of the federal spirit, the move could backfire on the congress. Finally, and in keeping with the conduct of beleaguered leaders, Mr Rao can explore the possibility of fighting the Lok Sabha election on an emotive theme. True, this would be an uncharacteristic move and may even lack conviction. But it is difficult to imagine other alternatives for a Prime Minister who now presides over a lame-duck government. His situation is not enviable.

'Golden Opportunity' for Opposition Seen

BK1212114794 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 12 Dec 94 p 13

[Editorial: "Third Force Again?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the spectacular victory of the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh and the Janata Dal in Karnataka, the concept of a third force has gained sudden importance in national polities. Apart from the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, there is another choice before the electorate. While the number of Congress-controlled States has shrunk and the Bharatiya Janata Party is in power only in Rajasthan and the National Capital Region of Delhi, the rest of the country is mostly under the control of National Front-Left Front parties constituting the third force. In West Bengal, the left Front is in office, in Orissa and Bihar, the Janata Dal controls the government and in the most populous State, Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj party combine is in power. In Tamil Nadu, where the unpredictable Jayalalitha is at the helm of affairs, the ruling AIADMK admirably qualifies itself to be part of the third force. The national political scene is thus changing fast and the outcome of the February Assembly elections will provide more indications of the likely changes. Though the Congress is well entrenched in power at the Centre [federal government] and it is not necessary that it should relinquish office in the context of the setback it has suffered in the Assembly polls, it cannot be sure of faring well in the general election. One thing, however, is certain: Simultaneous Congress monopoly of power at the Centre and in most of the States has come to an end. On the contrary, it can now expect a major challenge from the third force in the next parliamentary elections.

If the National Front and the Left Front come together, they can be a formidable force. Their efforts to remain united had failed in the past but that does not necessarily suggest that the concept of a third force will always remain an illusory goal. Their efforts to remain united had failed in the past but that does not necessarily suggest that the concept of a third force will always remain an illusory goal. What can be envisaged is not a single party into which all other parties will be merged but a federation of parties waging political battles under the same banner. At this stage it is not difficult to visualise a combination of the Left parties, the constituents of what is known as the Janata Parivar and the regional parties like the Asom Gana Parishad, Telugu Desam and the Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu coming together to emerge as a major force. However, the earlier experiments in non-Congress governments at the Centre ended in disaster and it is too early to say that such experiments will succeed in future. But now that the third force idea has again gained importance, something concrete can be expected by the time of the next general election. If the concept is to gain a concrete shape and produce satisfactory results, ideology should be the base on which it should be built. The constituents of the force should have no differences on the economic political and social policies that the nation needs to follow. The southern verdict has thrown up a golden opportunity for the National Front-Left Front combine.

Voters 'Teach A Lesson' to 'Rulers'

BK1312093094 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 13 Dec 94 p 10

[Editorial: "The Voter Strikes Back"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The outcome of the recent elections in the south has once again made it abundantly clear that wherever the voters can discern even a faintly credible alternative to a faltering and insensitive ruling party, they opt for it if only to teach a lesson to the rulers of the day. If there was believed to be a late surge in favour of the Congress in Andhra Pradesh, it was presumably because the observers did not quite regard the Telugu Desam's rather amusing man and wife show to be able to influence the electorate to such an extent. On the surface, Mr N.T. Rama Rao's party had a great deal going against it. Apart from a lacklustre earlier stint in power, the party supremo seemed too obsessed with his new wife to be able to keep firm control over a restive party, including his grumbling sons-in-law, while his populist policies threatened bankruptcy. In the event, it didn't matter. The voters had made up their minds to give him yet another chance, helped to a considerable extent by the Congress' utter political bankruptcy which ensured that its pie-in-the-sky promises of balanced budgets and economic revival failed to carry conviction. What the voters wanted was an end to the endless bickering, the harassment of chief ministers by their opponents within the party and by New Delhi, the allegations of corruption and the threat of the party falling apart under the strain. Clearly, a party whose followers can heckle the chief minister in the Prime Minister's presence and get away with it could not have hoped to emerge with flying colours.

Such an outfit deserved to be slapped down and this is exactly what the voters did. It is to their credit, too, that they contemptuously rejected the attempt to boost the Congress position by presenting the Prime Minister as the son of the soil. As always maturity and a strong common sense have marked the behaviour of the Indian voter. If the Telugu Desam's revival seems surprising, that of the Janata Dal in Karnataka is nothing short of a

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miracle. For a party which has no central presence, from which opportunistic elements have been steadily drifting away and whose leader boasts of a craftiness whose only apparent purpose is to keep everyone confused about the number of times he has resigned it was an astonishing feat to rout its seemingly more powerful opponent. But here again the trends were evident right from the beginning of the campaign. The electorate had left no one in any doubt that it no longer had any use for a party whose chief minister did not seem to know when he would be stabbed in the back by his friends. So it opted for the old war horses, Mr Ramakrishna Hegde and Mr Deve Gowda in the hope that they will realise that their future, too, remains very much in the voters' hands. Indeed, this seems to be the central message of the polls—other the voter cannot be taken for granted. Performance is all that matters. If a ruling party fails in this respect and is perceived to be unrepentant, it will be thrown out.

Rao Cautions Against Congress-I 'Infighting'

BK1312045294 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 13 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. Narasimha Rao has called for containing infighting within the Congress-I and combating the populist slogans being adopted by the opposition parties to get votes. Addressing a meeting of the Congress-I Parliamentary Party [CPP-I] executive in New Delhi last night, he cautioned against the tactics of some parties to encourage fundamentalism of various kinds, such as caste, creed, and religion. Mr. Narasimha Rao said what is required is giving healthy issues to the people. The executive shared Mr. Narasimha Rao's concern over the infighting within the party and suggested that steps be taken to contain it. The meeting was of the view that rebel party candidates should not be readmitted to the party at any cost.

The CPP-I executive also discussed the economic reforms program. It was of the view that the economic policies should be stable and in the interest of the people. The CPP-I secretary, Mr. Sudhir Sawant, said the executive analyzed the results of the assembly elections in four states and discussed the steps required to be taken in the assembly elections in five states in February. He said the CPP-I general body meeting scheduled for today has been postponed.

'Crushing Defeat' of Congress Viewed

BK1312102594 Delhi NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 11 Dec 94 p 1

["Page One Comment": "A Total Defeat"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is not necessary for this defeat to be deemed a vote of no confidence against Narasimha Rao, though from the dissension inside the Congress Party it may be construed that way. Yet if Congress Party members refuse to consider this crushing defeat in the assembly elections as such, what greater self-deception may the biggest political party of the nation choose to indulge in? The Congress has lost decisively in Sikkim and with what cheek can it claim its victory in Goa? Normally it could have dismissed this debacle as a minor setback in the smaller states, but its almost rout in the bigger states like Andhra and Karnataka has made it a total defeat for the Congress. The defeat in the Andhra elections has much graver repercussions, not only because Andhra is the prime minister's home state, but also in the sense that the voters again have shown that their level of political maturity is much higher than that of the political pundits. The wizards of the Congress must have thought Andhra voters were their captive voters since in their estimation, these voters were unlikely to go against a leader from their state—a leader guiding the destiny of the entire nation as prime minister. Narashimha Rao gave maximum attention to canvassing in Andhra Pradesh to excite this feeling of regional possessiveness and honor. But making the Congress come a cropper, the Andhra voters have given a clear message that they regard Telugu's regional honor to be much more important than the image of a person from the state, however highly placed that person is, even the prime minister himself.

This is the total defeat of the Congress. Barring just one crutch of support from one front in Kerala, the Congress virtually has been routed in all four southern states. The party had already lost north India. The remaining states where Congress governments are surviving are doing so under increasing threat to their continuity and stability. Even the party itself is not sure of its continued survival. Imagining its continued ability to hold the central government is in the party's wildest dreams. If the Congress Party's defeat in north India is considered the first installment of its defeat, this last and final installment of defeat from the south has made it a total rout. You may go on harping the off-key tune of socialism, yet recklessly invite foreign investment; you may have the beads of secularism touching your hand in a regular show, but your patronage may always be open to pacification on communal lines; you may keep politics above caste considerations, but select candidates purely on the basis of these narrow criteria—then be honest and tell: how could the voters deem your much vaunted all-India-level of thinking to be authentic at all?

No one knows what will be the eventual outcome of the very negation of this dual-faceted Congress thinking, first by the north and now by the south. But it ought to be a cause of grave concern for the Congress itself. Having allowed the iron frame holding its image to get rusted from all sides, what should the party do now? Obviously it must look inward and check the parameters necessary for its good health. It does not make much difference whether Narasimha Rao is ensconced at the summit or some one else. What does make the difference is the capacity of that person at the top to percolate his message down to the lowest denominator. If the party

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fails to impartially analyze the causes of its failures and does not make fresh efforts to regain control, it may never rise again.

'Bruised' Congress-I Urged Forward

BK1312091094 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 13 Dec 94 p 13

[Editorial: "Beyond the Debacle"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress party, bruised and battered, has wisely decided not to go to pieces. It can't put up a brave face because there is no easily recognisable face to put up and the foremost task is to stay united and embark on a low profile damage limitation exercise. The essential ingredients of this are spelt out, surprisingly enough, by Mr Arjun Singh, who has not stopped seeing himself as a potential alternative or successor to Mr Narasimha Rao, and Mr Narayan Dutt Tewari. The two have separately raised issues and posers about the future of the party which, on close look, appears to be a subtle and indirect indictment of the leadership. Mr Arjun Singh has spelt it out as the loss of the pro-poor, pro-minorities and pro-backward classes image of the Congress. To a large extent he is right, all these three sections of society were not long ago the electoral bulwark of the Congress. Today they are not. The Congress must do something drastic to regain its lost vote banks by image correction. There is a muffled campaign within the party and an open cry from the Opposition that the economic reforms of the Narasimha Rao regime were anti-poor and the vote in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka was an expression of the people's anger against the reforms. Nothing could be more far-fetched than this. The Telugu people and the Kannadigas were definitely angry with the Congress governments in their respective State but these governments had very little to do with the Centre's policy of economic liberalisation and privatisation. Corruption, lacklustre performance and the presence of discernible and acceptable alternatives were the reasons for the clear choice of the voters in Karnaka and Andhra Pradesh. Mr Narasimha Rao should not be defensive about his government's performance, nor should he allow any campaign within the Congress to water down the reforms or to arrest the pace of liberalisation.

There is, however, a very urgent need for the Congress to correct the impression being spread by non-Congress parties and a small section within the Congress that the economic policy is wholly oriented towards the rich and the well-to-do. Export incentives, building foreign exchange reserves, tax and duty concessions to industries, etc. are indicators of economic health, but they do not touch the problems of the people, except in a negative sense. Dr Manmohan Singh's claims about a fall in the inflation rate do not tally with the reality of the market place where prices of essential articles are rising by leaps and bounds. A subtle message that the economic liberalisation was the immediate cause for the additional price burden, did produce an adverse voter reaction. In fact, this aspect of the economic reform programme needs more than tactful handling by Mr Narasimha Rao. His rivals and detractors are bound to emphasise this in terms or pro-poor or anti-poor image and postures. The Prime Minister may be able to ward off pressures on him to relinquish the party presidentship or to appoint a working president but he cannot afford to ignore the demands for "re-structuring" the Congress to "restore its pro-poor and secularist image". Perhaps, the electoral defeats may have given Mr Rao a convenient handle to drop the identifiably corrupt elements in his ministry and re-orient the reform policy to strike a balance between welfare administration, poverty alleviation and free market economic policy. It is necessary to adopt pro-poor postures as all governments did in the past, even if there are no pro-poor policies. Mr Narasimha Rao must be aware that economic reforms might not have caused poll debacles but they are certainly not going to win elections for him or the Congress.

Rao Seen Returning to 'Survivor' Role

BK1212120094 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 12 Dec 94 p 8

[Commentary by Political Editor Ajoy Bose: "Poll Debacle Leaves Rao Down But Certainly Not Out"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The crushing defeat suffered by the Congress in the South introduces yet another twist to the country's politics. There is little doubt that the sheer magnitude of the ruling party's rout in both Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka will have reverberations which go far beyond the territorial boundaries of the two states.

More than anything else, the near complete wipe-out of the Congress in the Prime Minister, Mr PV Narasimha Rao's own home State despite his vigorous poll campaign, cannot but raise serious question marks on his leadership within the party as well as outside. Just as he looked to be consolidating his authority, Mr Rao has once again slid back to a vulnerable position. A rejuvenated Opposition is bound to launch a fresh offensive against the Government while Congress dissidents on the verge of losing their occupation have suddenly been given a new lease of life.

Mr Rao is now left with little option but to go back to his old tactics of grimly hanging on by the skin of his teeth even as political storms rage around his head. This no doubt will be even more annoying than before since over the past year the Prime Minister has had a respite from the daily struggle to survive and there were palpable signs of him getting quite aggressive. So much so, that in an uncharacteristic display of political machismo, he had started the election campaign in the South by the risky gambit of staking his own personal reputation in the poll outcome.

Significantly, this new found bravado was short-lived with Mr Rao choosing to go back on the backfoot well

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before the results were declared. During the election campaign itself, he suddenly retreated from his earlier statements claiming that it was not his but the country's future which was at stake in the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka polls. Whether this change of strategy was motivated by an inner premonition of the impending poll debacle or merely a natural urge to play safe, it was a tacit admission that all was not well for the Congress in the two states.

Yet, despite the return of dark clouds on the Prime Minister's political horizon, it would be unwise to exaggerate the impact of the disaster in the South on him. A closer examination of the forces arranged against Mr Rao both within the Congress as well as outside will reveal that while he may be down, he is certainly not out. Indeed, it would be foolhardy for either the Opposition or Congress dissidents to assume that the present travails of the Prime Minister was the beginning of his end.

Little threat from dynasty

Take, for instance, the situation prevailing inside the ruling party. Although Mr Rao's position as undisputed leader has been dented by the losses in Andhra Pradesh and Karanataka, there is at the same time not a single rival leader in the Congress at the moment who can stake his claim for being the alternative. Of the three main candidates for the position, Mr Sharad Pawar, Mr Arjun Singh and Mr Narain Dutt Tiwari, none have either the required backing of party MPs or a nationwide mass appeal to seize the party leadership.

Mr Pawar is far too busy with the imminent Maharashtra polls to get involved in a power tussle at the Centre [federal government] now and his initial reaction to the poll results has been far from confrontationist. The challenge from Mr Singh has largely been neutralised by the fact that his erstwhile lieutenant, Mr Digvijay Singh, presently Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, has grown wings himself and flown across to the Rao camp. As for Mr Tiwari, the pathetic number of MPs from his home State Uttar Pradesh by itself is much too big a handicap for him to become a major player in central politics.

There is also little chance of the three leaders mentioned above or even two of them forming an axis to oust the Prime Minister. None would allow the other to get the top job if they can help it and they may opt to let status quo prevail rather than lose out in a fresh race for the throne. Mr Rao has the further advantage of having the support of important power-brokers within the Congress like Mr Sitaram Kesari and Mr P Karunakaran without whose backing a change in leadership is virtually impossible.

It is true that the latent threat from the Gandhi dynasty remains and should Mrs Sonia Gandhi or her daughter, Ms Priyanka Gandhi, throw their hats into the ring, the entire complexion of Congress politics may change. But there is no reason whatsoever why the widow or the daughter would choose to plunge into the rough and tumble of politics particularly at a time when the prospects of the ruling party seem so uncertain. In any case, both must be aware that this would inevitably provoke a fresh controversy about Bofors. The recent briefing on investigations into the scandal by the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr VC Shukla, of Opposition leaders, where he went out of his way to mention the involvement of controversial Italian agent, Mr Ottavio Quattrocchi, a close friend of Mrs Sonia Gandhi, could not have escaped the notice of 10 Janpath.

Against all odds

If the threat from within is not that overwhelming for Mr Rao, he has similarly no need to panic about being toppled by the Opposition either. While there is understandable jubilation amongst other political parties at the massacre of the Congress in the South, they are helpless to immediately capitalise on this at the Centre since the ruling party now has a working majority in the Lok Sabha. So, however loudly the Opposition benches may scream in Parliament for the Prime Minister's resignation, there is little chance of a no-confidence motion against him acquiring its earlier status of a dreaded weapon.

The election windfall has of course provided Opposition parties a launching pad for the not-too-distant general elections. With the stunning victories carved out by the Telegu Desam and Janata Dal, the National Front is once again back in business. There is also no doubt that the gloom that had descended over the BJP ever since the party's poll debacle in the North last year will at least partially be lifted by its improved performance in Karnataka.

But here again appearances may prove deceptive. A renewed exercise by the old guard of the National Front to once again make a bid for the Central overnment is fraught with handicaps. Now that Mr VP Singh has opted out of he next polls, it may become impossible for even the Janata Dal, let alone its partners in the Front, to decide who would be the prime ministerial candidate. Unlike in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka where voters were faced with a clear alternative leadership to that of the Congress, a motley collection of jaded Opposition leaders of yesteryear jostling with each other for the top post may well fail to click at the hustings.

As for the BJP, its claim of being the only single alternative to the Congress is far too premature as the Assembly elections in the North showed last year. With Ayodhya steadily receding as an emotive national issue, it would take a near miracle for the party to acquire a clear majority in the next general elections.

Mr Rao's proverbial nine lives, therefore, are yet to be exhausted. Having been humbled in the polls, the Prime Minister is back plying his favourite role of a survivor.

Editorial Speculates on Rao's Future

BK1312115894 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 13 Dec 94 p 10

[Editorial: "Narasimha Rao's Future"]

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[FBIS Transcribed Text] For all the fissiparous tendencies it demonstrates, the Congress does have the habit of presenting a united front when it is in serious trouble. It will be a mistake, therefore, to dismiss the latest working committee resolution as the handiwork of the Narasimha Rao loyalists intent on fending off challenges from the Prime Minister's suspected opponents inside the party. True, there is little doubt that those who are close to Mr Narasimha Rao will keep a close eye on the activities of Mr Arjun Singh, Mr Sharad Pawar, Mr N.D. Tiwari, Mr Jagannath Mishra and others from now on. But, at the same time, their long stints in the corridors of power have also taught Congressmen when to strike down a rival and when to act with Caution. For a start, it is not the Congress tradition to confront anyone in face-to-face combat. Instead, the dissidents usually try to gain their objective in a more indirect way. Moreover, the Congressmen also know it is better to be circumspect so far as factional squabbles are concerned when the going is really rough, as it is now. It is on the cards, therefore, that Mr Narasimha Rao will remain at the helm till the next round of elections. Only if the party suffers further setbacks will the question of a change of leadership come to the fore.

It has to be remembered in this context that the latest outcome has taken the winners as much by surprise as it has the losers. The reason for this is that Mr Narasimha Rao's first three years in office have not been an unmitigated disaster as the results seem to indicate. He has had a string of successes to his credit, the most notable of which is the quiet and yet firm manner in which he turned the economy around from its public sector-oriented Nehruvian moorings towards liberalisation and a free play of market forces. Such a change has all the features of a revolution and it is presumably because of Mr Narasimha Rao's unassertive style of functioning that the country has not yet appreciated all the implications of the sea-change that has taken place. Even if the full impact of the move has not been felt, especially by the less privileged sections of society, there is no denying that the bankruptcy of the 1990-91 period is now no more than a bad dream and that there is a sense of buoyancy in the air. In the field of foreign affairs, too, the U.S. seems to have realised in the wake of the Prime Minister's Washington visit that New Delhi can no longer be pushed around on the question of its defence perceptions while India's potential as an emerging market has introduced a new favourable factor in our bilateral ties with the Americans. Where Mr Narasimha Rao obviously failed was in being unable to assuage the sentiments of the Muslims over the Babri masjid issue. He also conveyed the unfortunate impression of being less than perturbed over allegations of corruption against his party men. But otherwise his has been a success story to which some Congressmen may feel that there is no reason why new chapters cannot be added, provided there is greater transparency about some of his scam-tainted colleagues—not to mention the Prime Minister's own health.

Iran

Five People Detained Over Fokker Aircraft Crash

LD1212174294 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Five people have been detained in Tehran and Esfahan in connection with the crash of a Fokker aircraft earlier this year.

In a meeting of the country's judicial officials, the judge in charge of the Fokker crash case announced: These individuals have been detained in order to facilitate the further pursuance of investigations.

In this meeting, moreover, the head of the judiciary, Mr. Mohammad Yazdi, clarified that the country's judicial forums, as well as helping individuals and corporate entities regain and recover their rights, are also obliged to answer any queries that the public might like to put forward. [sentence as heard]

Mr. Yazdi stressed: In the case of the crashed Fokker aircraft, first of all, the rights of the victims' families must be specified and recovered quickly and accurately. Second, the causes of such incidents must be found, so that if there was complacency and negligence by anyone, those responsible may be legally pursued.

In this meeting, furthermore, the legal team in charge of dealing with the Fokker crash case, which has been given full authority and carries a special warrant, submitted a comprehensive report about measures adopted so far.

At present, this team has compiled a case file that has eight volumes and 1,500 pages. This file will be submitted to the court in the near future.

The head of the judiciary has said that the Fokker incident case will be dealt with by an open court.

Draft Resolution on Human Rights Delivered to UN

LD1112153594 Tehran IRNA in English 1330 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New York, Dec. 10, IRNA—A draft resolution on the status of human rights in Iran was delivered, as in previous years, to the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly Friday [9 December].

Media sources at the United Nations say that 12 member states of the European Union (EU) have prepared the draft resolution under influence of Israel and the U.S.

The draft resolution is to be put to the vote at the 49th meeting of the U.N. General Assembly's Third Committee on Human Rights, Social, Cultural and Human Issues next week.

The countries preparing the draft resolution have expressed concern about the issues raised in the report of

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Reynaldo Galindo Pohl including discriminatory treatment of women, high number of executions in Iran, torture and violence, restriction on the freedom of expression and thought.

According to statistics released so far, women make up over 43 percent of college students and scientific staff of universities.

Chief Justice Ayatollah Moqtadaei last week termed Galindo Pohl's reports as "biased", saying they (the reports) have been filed under pressure of arrogant powers.

Ayatollah Moqtadaei said, "Iran is ready to cooperate with all envoys of human rights organizations, except Galindo Pohl, who want to study the status of human rights in Iran impartially and without any prejudgement."

The EU members have also voiced concern about what they called discriminatory treatment of ethnic and religious minorities and about other points of the report.

Last week, Rabbi Yousef Kohan, leader of Iranian Jewish community, described Galindo Pohl's report as "repetitive and void of any value".

He said that religious minorities in Iran have no problem in their personal affairs or in practicing their religious rites. Religious minorities including Christians, Assyrians, Jews and Zoroastrians have their own deputies at the Iranian Majles.

Simultaneous with the publishing of the draft resolution, the U.S. Defence Secretary, William Perry commented that a strong and unified Iran posed threats to the survival of Israel and Washington's allies in the Persian Gulf.

The draft resolution has claimed that in Iran Christian minorities are not protected properly and a number of them have been exposed to threats and intimidation.

Last summer, the terrorist Mojahedin e-Khalq Organization (MKO) murdered three Iranian Christian pastors in a bid to trigger sectarian clashes and blame Iran for them.

In his report, Galindo Pohl has not make a mention of the role of the terrorist MKO in the murder of the three Iranian pastors. The murderer of one of the pastors is still in prison.

Foreign journalists have also visited the place where one of the Christian pastors was killed in Tehran and spoke with the murderer last July.

The draft resolution has also expressed concern that the judicial procedures in Iran do not correspond with international standards and that capital punishment is practiced in the country.

In Iran, death sentence is issued on drug traffickers involved in smuggling of a large amount of narcotic drugs.

In addition to the draft resolution, another resolution proposed by Italy on abolition of death sentence in all countries, was disapproved by the Third Committee of the U.N. General Assembly. The proposed resolution called on all U.N. member states to take necessary measures to amend their laws and abolish capital punishment at most by the year 2000.

Muslim and non-aligned states which are members of the U.N. announced that the Italian proposed draft resolution had ignored the sovereignty and right of countries to adopt their desired penal codes for combatting major crimes and felonies. Those countries suggested that the proposed resolution be amended so that it may not be obligatory for countries to abolish capital punishment.

Despite opposition of European governments to that proposal, 44 Muslims and non-aligned countries voted against the Italian-proposed draft resolution.

President Approves Second 5-Year Development Plan

LD1212213294 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program in Perisan 1630 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani today passed the bill on the second five-year socio-economic development plan. The Budget and Planning Organization will implement the plan. The bill has been passed by the Majles.

Minister's Impeachment Signed; Nurbakhsh Appointed

95LA0022C Tehran SALAM in Persian 26 Sep 94 p 9

[FBIS Translated Text] The proposal to impeach the minister of energy was recently signed by 15 deputies.

Sonqor deputy Mr. Mohammadifard, one of the signatories of the proposal to impeach the minister of energy, announced the above news and said to our reporter: I deny the news published in newspapers yesterday and the day before yesterday to the effect that impeachment was proposed by the deputy from Kermanshah. No! The impeachment was proposed by deputies from other cities, but we signed it because Kermanshah Province is faced with many difficulties in supplying drinking water. He predicted that more deputies will sign the proposal by next week. Then it will be presented to the speaker of the Majles. He said: At present, 15 signatures have been collected but I believe that many more will sign the proposal next week. Some brothers are not willing to sign but wish that impeachment of a number of ministers takes place. He emphasized that the impeachment proposal is firm.

Referring to the details of impeachment, he said: There are many issues raised in the impeachment statement.

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Issues raised by other deputies are not of my concern, but one of the reasons that I signed the proposal is the drinking water situation in Kermanshah. Unclean drinking water has caused tens of deaths in Kermanshah. Some illegal developments have taken place in that province. I have put forward a question for the minister of energy. It is included in the committee agenda. God willing, I will bring up the question in the open meeting of the Majles.

In a brief interview yesterday, one of the main sponsors of the impeachment proposal against the minister of energy said that the impeachment issues include the sale of Ahab company, receiving a loan from the World Bank under humiliating conditions, and problems with a number of projects such as the Sardab Rud project and 15-Khordad Dam, and problems of the Hirman River water. He said: One of the issues is the sale of Ahab company. This company was worth more than $2 billion but was sold to the private sector for $300-400 million. He did not elaborate on other impeachment issues.

The Majles had a closed meeting yesterday after the break.

Mr. Yahyavi, a member of the leadership committee of the Majles, said in an interview: At the closed meeting with the ministers of economic affairs, commerce, industries, and heavy industries, as well as the new governor of Bank Markazi, deputies raised concerns about erratic price increases and the resulting hardships for people. The minister of economic affairs explained the causes of fluctuation in prices, but the discussion was not completed and will continue at the next closed meeting on Wednesday.

Following the appointment of Mr. Mohsen Nurbakhsh as the new governor of Bank Markazi and various reactions to this appointment, we sought the views of a few deputies on this subject.

The question asked was: "Do you approve of the appointment of Dr. Nurbakhsh, replacing Dr. 'Adeli as the governor of Bank Markazi?" Some deputies simply responded by saying "yes" or "no," but others gave a brief explanation as follows:

- 'Erfani, Talesh deputy, said: Yes, to deal with economic problems, superior experience and wisdom is needed. Mr. Nurbakhsh has been involved in the shaping of our economy. We expect him to deal strongly with the problem of rising prices and confusion in the exchange market. Kazemi, Khalkhal deputy, said: Yes, we can say that the student is gone and the professor has arrived. He is more experienced and can do better. Ghabedinzadeh, Khoy deputy, said: Majles passed judgement on Mr. Nurbakhsh when it turned him down for appointment as a minister. Sharifi, Arak deputy, said: No. Rashidi, Marvdasht deputy, said: Majles has already given its opinion about Mr. Nurbakhsh. Qasgqavi, Shahriar deputy, said: I do not expect a major change because both of them have the same orientation. The main issue is government policy and it does not matter who the manager is. Lohkan, Lanjan deputy, said: It has already been done. I have no opinion. Mokhtari, Najafabad deputy, said: No. I am not against him but his economic ideas. Nateq-Nuri, Nur deputy, said: The president is the one who has to have an opinion on these issues. We can only pass judgement after he works on the economic system and produces some results. Khabbaz, Kashmar deputy, said: This is just a change in appearance, but we desire a change in the nature of the process. Changes will take place, but not what people want. Nowruzi, Malayer deputy, said: I am against his appointment because he cannot improve the situation but will make more matters more difficult. Moqadam Firuz, Arak deputy, said: No, the Majles voted against him for some reason. It was because his policies are unacceptable. The Majles and the executive branch must cooperate. What good has Mr. Nurbakhsh done for the country to deserve a second chance? We should not repeat the same mistakes again. Sobhaninia, Neyshabur deputy, said: We expect him to offer new methods and reform the banking policies that impact the country's economy. Qomi, Varamin deputy, said: I am not against him but he needs to reform the economic policies for the benefit of deprived masses. Seyyed Khamushi, Tehran deputy, said: I pray for his success. Nariman, Babol deputy, said: I have no opinion at present. We have to wait and see what will be done. Dastjerdi, Tehran deputy, said: The present situation will not change. Zare'i Qanavati, Behbahan deputy, said: My opinion will have no effect. Ja'fari, Urumieh deputy, said: The Majles did not approve of him. Although his appointment is the privilege of the president, it would have been better if he had not said that he will continue with the past policies. Karimi, Shushtar deputy, said: No, I am against his appointment because there is no difference between the two of them. ['Alireza] Sadra, Dezful deputy, said: The economic problems are not solved by change of personnel, especially because Mr. Nurbakhsh has announced that he has no plan to change the system of Bank Markazi.

Mines, Metals Minister Says Sector Expanding

LD1112132494 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 11 Dec 94

[[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] In a meeting with President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Mohammad Hoseyn Mahluji, the minister of mines and metals, reported on the third gathering of the managers of the ministry and referred to an annual growth of 18.9 percent in the mining sector and 32.4 percent in the metals industry during the course of the First Development Plan, and said the increase in production during the first plan was 11 billion dollars and it will reach 20 billion dollars in the Second Development Plan.

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He said considering the high level of specialization in the mining and metal sector, as well as the domestic ability to design and produce—which in turn has eliminated the need for multi-billion foreign purchase of these industries—and with suitable planning, one large mining and metal industry will be going into production every month.

The minister said that now the domestic market is saturated with our products, all the industrial units of the ministry will be able to meet their requirements through the use of foreign currency obtained from exports, and not from currency obtained from the sale of oil.

Referring to the presence of Iran in international markets, the minister said the construction of a steel plant in Bahrain, with the joint investment of the two countries, for producing metals used in construction, and the building of a Kaolin factory in the Turkmenistan Republic are among the industrial and technological activities of the ministry abroad.

Encouragement of Foreign Investment Discussed

NC1212115994 Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian 27 Nov 94 p 4

[Commentary by 'Ali Feyz: "Glad Tidings From Nurbakhsh"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Central Bank Governor Mohsen Nurbakhsh said in Karachi, the center of Sindh Province, that privatization is the main objective of Iran's economy and conveyed the glad tidings that a new law will soon be implemented for foreign investment in Iran and its support with the transfer of accruing profits without restriction.

Even though the Central Bank governor has made no new observations and our officials have frequently propounded the issue of privatization as an irrevocable principle, mention of this issue by the country's highest banking official means that foreign investment magnates are still apprehensive or have not invested to the extent that the Iranian Government expected.

The question that arises is: Why is it that despite the pompous promises by officials, foreign investors have not seriously entered the field of economic activity in Iran as was expected? Presumably, every individual would answer this question according to his own perception, which would not necessarily be the same as that of others. We will just present our own views, which would be like groping in the dark in view of the current disarray in the economic market and the unbridled policies that prevail. [passage omitted]

The announcement by Nurbakhsh regarding the transfer of profits from Iran without restriction certainly constitutes glad tidings for the multinational conglomerates, especially the American, European, and Japanese ones. But would the circumstances prevailing in Iran soften the stonehearted multinationals? The answer to this question is difficult. And there are doubts. Investors usually consider various parameters [preceding word in English] in accepting investment risks [preceding word in English]. [passage omitted]

When we are deprived of stability in decisionmaking and a realistic assessment regarding privatization at home, how can we encourage investors to enter the Iranian economic market on the level of our expectations? Who is ready to guarantee that by inducting the multinationals and handing over the fate of Iran's economy to them, these issues will be resolved?

We expelled the multinationals by staging the Islamic revolution in Iran. How do we expect the same multinationals to act in a different set of circumstances? If we were to suppose that the multinationals have received these glad tidings from Central Bank Governor Nurbakhsh and are willing to return, will the transfer of the accruing profits without restriction not be tantamount to enlisting foreign accomplices to pillage our national wealth, something the brokers surreptitiously and unobtrusively started quite some time ago?

Daily Criticizes Bureaucratic 'Weakness'

NC1112132494 Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian 6 Dec 94 pp 1, 2

[Editorial: "Weak Management in Tackling Unforeseen Occurrences"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the past few years natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, and storms have caused extensive damage. Along with colossal financial loss, some Muslim Iranians have also been killed. It is difficult to handle such occurrences in a manner that prevents any kind of loss. However, most of these events can be predicted, and planning for swift follow ups, which could mitigate the extent of material and human losses, is imperative.

The establishment of the headquarters for unforeseen disasters and the allocation of a budget and resources for this organization and other official departments, which have obligations in this area, was geared to this end. Unfortunately, in the past years we have witnessed events that cannot be easily ignored. The recent floods in the country's provinces, especially in the deprived areas of Khuzestan Province, have wreaked havoc. [passage omitted]

Naturally, the forecasting of such phenomena that has frequently happened in our country in certain areas such as Khuzestan is not difficult. To minimize the damages from floods and correctly use hydrospheric and atmospheric conditions, extensive infrastructural work should be done, such as the construction of dams, designing of rural residential areas, watching the course of floods, and planning control of the flow of the waters: all these are basic issues that need to be given greater priority.

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Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that dam construction has been given much attention in the past few years. However, those were part of an interim or long-term program that needs greater resources and time for intensive planning. What should be given immediate attention on principle is the establishment of a strong organization with special resources for swift tackling of such occurrences, especially in areas such as Khuzestan. Unfortunately, there has been much hesitation in doing so.

In approaching such phenomena, things such as organization, swift action, and utilization of all national resources are imperative. Regrettably, these resources have not been used to the fullest as they should have been during the recent floods in Khuzestan. The main weakness lies in the planning and executive management. It is not important that resources should be centralized in one organization or headquarters. What is important is that management should be strong and organized so that in all circumstances human and national resources can be easily mobilized and human and material losses can be prevented.

What is the problem in setting up subsidiary units of a headquarters for tackling unforeseen disasters in areas such as Khuzestan itself, which is threatened by inundation every year? Under normal circumstances, these units could perform other functions. Why should we wait until the floods have caused devastation and then hasten to help, especially when we know the conditions in the southern rivers are such that with only a day or two of heavy rainfall they overflow their banks with the possibility of floods and destruction in the areas around the rivers? [passage omitted]

Even though our media provided some excellent and timely reports, it did not display the requisite sensitivity. This is the duty of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran that by providing extensive coverage it should arouse immediate and necessary sensitivity and dynamic motivation to develop a national approach toward these incidents.

Clandestine Radio Opposes Khamene'i as Marja'

NC1312121394 (Clandestine) Voice of Mojahed in Persian 0700 GMT 13 Dec 94

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Not many days have passed since the coterie of ruling clerics issued some invalid statements and a scroll with the signatures of their puppets in the clerical Majles. The name of Khamene'i has been incorporated as a marja' [source of emulation] in the list of the clerics named sources of emulation. But in this short period the truth about this farcical "marja'-making" has transpired.

The Iranian people are basically disgusted with this regime and are counting the days until it is toppled. The clerics in Qom and Mashhad and even some of the higher clerical echelons in the hierarchy have turned their backs on this ridiculous game and were not prepared to utter one word endorsing Khamene'i, even, that is, the chief of the Supreme Court or president of this regime.

Nowadays foreign publications also carry pejorative terms while alluding to Khamene'i and this travesty, terms such as "Khamene'i's sycophancy to achieve the marja'iyat" [state of being a source of emulation].

The remarks by the cleric Yazdi on Friday [9 December] regarding marja'iyat reflect this abjectness and humiliation. He said: In these sensitive circumstances, individuals, personalities, those who wield the pens, who speak from the podiums, and who address vast gatherings should be very cautious not to make negative remarks. It would be a mistake to make such remarks about what a person is or is not.

It is obvious that he was referring to those untrustworthy litany-chanters such as Jannati, Yazdi, and Nateq-Nuri, who have put him at the head of the regime but could not and will not be able to make him don the mantle of the marja'iyat.

Following extensive opposition to the display of Khamene'i's marja'-making, Yazdi resorted to threats and said [opponents] are liable to legal prosecution. He added: It is not correct to say that one person was much older, one had not written his treatise, or that another had done so. None of these are shari'i [according to shari'ah] criteria.

In any case it is clear that the one who has not written his treatise or whose age is being objected to in the seminaries is none other than Khamene'i. But if the cleric Yazdi were to mention the criteria that were acceptable to the Khomeyni-type clerics, even then, dozens of other clerics were more qualified than Khamene'i. So Yazdi reneged and used the last resort, that is, the regime's helplessness and insolvency.

Thus, he clearly dragged the name of Khamene'i, the spurious Vali-ye Faqih [supreme jurisconsult], into the mire. He said: "If there were no just believer when it comes to the issues of governance, even a faseq [corrupt] believer could carry out these functions. At times it is said that there is no harm if carried out by a tyrant or unbeliever." This means that he wanted to say there is no other recourse. We must make Khamene'i the marja' even if he does not have the qualifications, even if he is an infidel and a corrupt tyrant. This is what we must do.

The important issue that was on the verge of strangling the ruling clerics and wrested their mental balance from them is the issue of Khoms [tithing, in Islamic law] and levies, which is used as a pretext for plundering assets in the name of religion from the deprived people and is used for repression and war and for hoarding enormous wealth for themselves.

In this regard, they propound prolific jurisprudential and other reasons. Yazdi said the shari'a levies are not to

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be given to the jurisprudent or marja' who is not ruling or is not involved in government affairs. He added: I should tell the clerics and seminarians not to give the share of the imam to those who are not the imams. It is obvious what exorbitant financial and material benefits are hidden behind the disputes among the ruling clerics on the issue of the marja'iyat. The fact is that when the issue reaches a level of haggling and argument and [words indistinct], this again proves that, as the leader of the Iranian resistance Brother Mojahed Mas'ud Rajavi said, the vestiges of Khomeyni are on the verge of (?downfall).

The cleric Yazdi said in his Friday sermon that one of the most fundamental principles, which cannot be revised until the day of resurrection, is that of the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult]. He added: The legitimacy of the Islamic government stems from this principle.

Yes. This very fundamental principle has been invalidated now and the vestiges of Khomeyni are now at the mercy of the greatest crisis and internal fissure in their regime.

Commentary Supports Khamene'i's Statement on Women

LD1112144994 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leader of the Islamic revolution, the Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, delivered an important speech during his meeting with the members of the High Council of the Cultural Revolution on Saturday [10 December]. In part of his speech the leader of the Islamic revolution pointed to certain cultural allegations of the West against the great Iranian nation and the Islamic government, considering it as the sinister act resulting from the evil goals of the West against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The leader stipulated: What has been raised in the British parliament in connection with the Islamic governments treatment of women in Iran has been nothing except relying on false news and it is a cultural allegation, by leveling of which the British parliament has degraded itself to the level of a mercenary correspondent.

The remarks of the leader of the Islamic revolution on the significance of the role of culture in uplifting the human communities, especially the emphasis on the significance of the status of women in playing this part in Islamic community, speak of the importance that women enjoy in the Islamic system.

Impartial and informed observers, studying Islamic and Western communities, consider the status of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran as being different from the one in the West. But the difference is not in depriving the women of their rights; rather it is in line with the uplifting of the status and value of a woman in the community. The presence of women on the various social, political, and cultural fields in today's Iran, including their presence in the parliament, at the universities and in difference social posts speaks of the same role and is contrary to what is thought about them in the West.

The Islamic Republic of Iran does not consider the freedom of women in their moral degradation and their use as elements in the propaganda and commercial aids in order to increase the sale of consumer goods. The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great significance to the determining role of women in the family set up and in the society and highly respects and values this role. This is a point which even the Western critics are fully aware and they know it well that many problems are facing in the Western society, including Britain, the cradle of European civilization, and which have led to the disintegration of the family system in the Western society, do not exist in Islamic Iran.

According to impartial observers, criticisms against the conditions of the women in Iran by the so-called defenders of the human rights is taking place at a time when the European society is not willing today to observe the basic rights of the women as cited in the UN Charter—that is wearing dress compatible with the cultural and religious values—and is openly practicing a kind of social discrimination against a large number of Muslim women in the Western society. What is certain is the point that the status of women in the Islamic Republic system is reflected in the role that the Islamic community has entrusted on them and this is a trend which has enriched and perfected itself in the wake of the victory of the Islamic revolution and is presently continuing on the path compatible with the real value and status of women in the society.

Rafsanjani Receives Portuguese Trade Minister

De Oliveira Views Expansion of Ties

LD1212121194 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today received Fernando Faria de Oliveira, Portugal's minister of trade and tourism.

The president said at the meeting: Iran and Portugal have a long history of relations which justifies their continuation and further expansion. Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated that establishing a balance in the trade and commercial relations of Iran and Portugal is very important to the stability and continuity of future cooperation between the two countries. He expressed the hope that the outcome of the Portuguese trade delegation's trip to Iran will be effective in speeding up the process of trade cooperation between the two countries.

The president emphasized that it is important for the two countries' private sectors to familiarize themselves

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with each others' resources and to work toward strengthening commercial contacts. He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to create the necessary facilities for Portugal to establish links with Iran's northern neighbors.

According to the Central News Unit, the Portuguese trade and tourism minister, on his part, described his talks in Tehran—especially in connection with the two countries' joint commission—as very good and fruitful. He said: Portugal regards the Islamic Republic of Iran as a steadfast and good colleague in the field of economics and trade and believes that the prospects for cooperation between the two are very bright. He added: Strengthening relations between Iran and the European Union is of special importance and can be counted as contributing to economic expansion at a global level.

Mr. de Oliveira stated that greater trust and confidence between the two countries will lead to greater increase in bilateral cooperation. He added: The Islamic Republic of Iran's stances toward Southeast Asian and East European countries are very principled and we should like to expand our relations with Central Asian countries via Iran.

Commercial Ties Upgraded

LD1212215794 Tehran IRNA in English 2132 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 12, IRNA—Commerce Minister Yahya ol-Eshaq told visiting Portuguese Minister of Trade and Tourism, Fernando Faria de Oliveira, here Monday [12 December] that such factors as cheap energy, an efficient workforce, new technology as well as abundance of natural and agricultural resources in Iran could be suitable grounds for Tehran-Lisbon cooperation.

Ol-Eshaq termed as "important" Iran-Portugal cooperation in Central Asia, and said Iran was for more extensive cooperation with Portugal in the areas of chemicals, pharmaceuticals, veterinary science, and timber and paper industries in view of Portugal's experience in the areas of construction, shipping, fishery and textiles.

He said the two countries have reactivated cooperation in the commercial sector after a lapse of several years and that holding of the Tehran-Lisbon joint economic commission would further enhance bilateral commercial and economic relations.

Oliveira, who is here at the head of a politico-economic delegation to sign a memorandum of understanding on expansion of commercial ties, expressed hope of positive results.

He said his country was busy exploring world markets and that Iran was among countries with which Portugal intended to have extensive relations.

Religious Cooperation With Brunei Explored

LD1212202894 Tehran IRNA in English 2019 GMT 12 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuala Lumpur, Dec. 12, IRNA—Brunei is ready to cooperate with Iran in arranging general training courses on the Holy Qur'an to the public and forming Irano-Bruneian friendship association.

In a meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan on Monday [12 December] Brunei's Acting Religious Affairs Minister Behin Yahya [name as received] briefed Iranian Ambassador Javad Ansari on his country's achievements in establishing an Islamic Bank and making religious courses compulsory for government employees.

In a phone contact with the IRNA office here today, Ansari said that in a separate meeting with Bruneian Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali [name as received] later on Monday, he surveyed growing Tehran-Bandar Seri Begawan relations and underscored the importance of a memorandum of understanding formerly reached between the two countries' officials and the need for following up of the provisions of the memo.

Mohammad Ali, he added, had said that his country had an enthusiastic outlook on prospect of bilateral relations and explored various areas of cooperation with Iran.

He voiced his country' s willingness to import agricultural and industrial products from Iran.

Kuwaiti Ambassador To 'Expand' Relations

LD1312091894 Tehran IRNA in English 0731 GMT 13 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 13, IRNA—The Kuwaiti ambassador to Tehran, 'Abdallah al-Duwaykh, termed as excellent relations between Iran and Kuwait and said that the two countries were actively working to further expand their political, economic and cultural ties.

Interviewed by the English daily 'IRAN NEWS', printed Monday [12 December], he said that Iranian deputy foreign minister Mohammad Hashemi would visit Kuwait in a near future, adding that his government looked forward to more visits by Iranian officials.

"Iraq's recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty was the first step taken by Baghdad in complying with U.N. resolutions," he noted, adding "Iraq must implement all U.N. resolutions, including those dealing with 630 Kuwaiti civilian prisoners held by Baghdad, paying war reparations to Kuwait, and settling border disputes before Kuwait changes its attitude towards the Iraqi regime."

The ambassador said that his government's policy "is to fully cooperate with its neighboring countries in matters of regional security" and stressed "disputes between brotherly neighbors should be settled peacefully."

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"Prior to the 8-year Iraqi-imposed war, Kuwait was Iran's main trading partner in the Persian Gulf area," al-Duwaykh said and hoped his country would reach the same trade status with the Islamic Republic again.

He concluded by pointing out that in the last Tehran trade exhibition more than 40 Kuwaiti companies were presented.

Turkish Paper's Lack of Freedom Claim Dismissed

LD1112160394 Tehran IRNA in English 1030 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 11, IRNA—The Iranian Embassy in Ankara on Friday [9 December] dismissed allegations levelled by the Istanbul-based daily MILLIYET on absence of freedom of expression in Iran.

The paper had alleged there was no freedom of expression in Iran and that Iranian writer 'Ali Akbar Sa'idi Sirjani had been jailed and later died because of expressing his views.

The laic [as received] columnist, Hikmet Halman, who wrote the article in MILLIYET is known for his hostile stance towards the Islamic revolution of Iran.

'Ali Akbar Sa'idi Sirjani was arrested for carrying and using drugs but was only put under house arrest due to his old age.

The embassy said in its statement that Sirjani died of coronary and cerebral problems on November 27 and was buried by his family in the course of a funeral procession and after going through autopsy examination at Tehran Coroner's Office.

The embassy stressed that freedom of expression was being observed in Iran more than in any other country, adding that Sirjani's articles were printed in the Iranian press even during his conviction.

In an interview published prior to his death, Sirjani had expressed repentance of his past hostile attitude towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and said he was decisive to compensate for his mistakes.

The embassy further said in the statement that MILLIYET's columnist irrespective of the fact that Iran had neighborly and brotherly relations with Turkey "has talked back."

It noted that if the columnist had acquired information from reliable sources, he would have made efforts to further strengthen friendly relations between the two neighboring countries.

Pakistan

Beijing, Islamabad Urged To Foil U.S. 'Designs'

BK1212103094 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 12 Dec 94 p 10

[Editorial: "President's Visit to China; Prospects for the Development of Bilateral Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has returned home after a seven-day visit to the People's Republic of China. During this visit, efforts were made to bring the two neighboring friendly countries closer and to create further warmth in their relationship. Pakistan and China are bound together by imperishable ties of mutual friendship and cooperation. China has neither allowed its ideology to affect its relations with foreign countries nor has it, unlike the superpowers, used its commercial relationship to exploit other countries.

Both Pakistan and China can trust each other and can be proud of their mutual friendship. The Karakoram Highway and the Heavy Mechanical Complex at Taxila are only two of the dozens of examples of Pakistan-China cooperation and interaction. China has always supported Pakistan's stand on Kashmir and Afghanistan, and during the India-Pakistan war of 1965, Beijing openly condemned Indian aggression and extended moral, diplomatic, and material support to Islamabad. In 1971 China unreservedly condemned the Indian aggression.

China has extended generous assistance to make Pakistan militarily strong and has provided all kinds of facilities—from the missile technology to the know-how for tank production, which has angered the United States. After the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, China's importance in the region has increased, and China is the only country capable of playing any role in the region to maintain global equilibrium. Even though conspiracies were hatched—previously by the former Soviet Union and currently by the United States—to bolster India to stand against China, the Chinese leadership did not commit any mistake in understanding the needs of the time and exhibited exemplary foresight in building its relationship with the United States. Washington's effort is to drive China with the same stick of its new world order that it uses to control the rest of the world, but Beijing has refused to be a sitting duck for the U.S. designs. The United States also tried to raise the issue of human rights as a condition for granting the most favored nation status to China, but the Chinese leadership is not ready to allow anybody to interfere in the country's internal affairs.

It is a historical fact that Pakistan played an important role in the establishment of contacts between China and the United States. It was during the martial law regime of General Yahya Khan that the then U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger paid a secret visit to China with Pakistan's assistance. That was the first visit ever by a senior U.S. official to China, but, regrettably, Washington reciprocated our friendly mediation by remaining neutral in the movement for the separation of erstwhile East Pakistan.

Pakistan and China still enjoy a very close relationship and proximity of views on global issues, and it can be hoped that President Leghari's week-long visit will go a

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long way in further strengthening these ties. President Leghari has drawn the attention of the Chinese guests toward the trade imbalance between the two countries and has also invited Chinese investors to invest in Pakistan. For this purpose, a specific zone can be allotted to the Chinese investors, and certain industries can also be reserved specifically for China. In the 1993-94 fiscal year, there was a gap of 1.16 billion rupees in Pakistan's trade with China. Beijing has asked its companies to purchase more goods from Pakistan to remove this trade imbalance. China provided Pakistan with an interest-free amount of $9.1 million in 1991-92 and $13.8 million in the 1993-94 fiscal year.

Pakistan has always been grateful to China for its generous assistance. However, a feeling of coolness has allegedly developed in the bilateral relationship during the last few years. It is hoped that President Leghari's visit will have removed the causes of that alleged coolness and that the president has successfully tried to eliminate any misunderstanding Beijing might have. The Pakistan-China friendship needs to be further consolidated in the years to come, because a danger of increased global conspiracies in the region has been sensed. The United States is trying to help make Kashmir an independent state, so that it can execute its conspiracies against Pakistan and China from there. It should be hoped that China and Pakistan will succeed, as always, in foiling external designs through mutual cooperation and harmony.

Editorial Discusses ICO Peace Accord Agenda

BK1112135694 Islamabad THE NATION in English 11 Dec 94 p 6

[Editorial: "Recognising Israel"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An important item on the agenda of the forthcoming OIC [ICO] summit in Casablanca is the recognition of Israel by the Islamic countries. Israel's peace accords with the PLO, its fiercest opponent in the Middle East, and Jordan have given a new confidence to both Israel and its patron, the US, to push for the country's recognition by the Islamic countries and thus to pave the way for its rehabilitation in the Arab world in particular and the other Muslim countries in general. The campaign towards that end has been on for quite sometime with some of the Arab countries showing a willingness to normalise relations with their longtime adversary. Those who favour the recognition use the argument that since the two parties to the conflict with the Jewish state namely, the PLO and Jordan, have made peace with Israel, and negotiations are underway with Syria and Lebanon as well, there is little justification for the other Muslim countries to hold back from normalising relations with the country. That though is a rather simplistic interpretation of the situation by those who are looking for a justification to do what their Western benefactors, chiefly the US, would like them to do. Given the fact that Israel remains in occupation of the Arab lands that it took over through an act of aggression and is still to fulfil some important obligations to the PLO, the recognition issue is a strong diplomatic tool with which the Muslim countries can keep Israel under pressure to vacate the Golan Heights and the occupied Lebanese territory as also to honor all the provisions of the Palestinian self-rule accord. Yet another outstanding issue which needs to be settled before normalisation of relations with Israel is the status of Jerusalem, the second holiest city for the Muslims, which the Jewish state has declared as its capital on the basis of a strange claim that goes back to the biblical times. Since this city was also taken over by Israel during its 1967 war, it is only fair that the Muslim countries should refuse to reward the Israeli aggression by letting it keep Jerusalem. Hence, it would be only appropriate for the Islamic countries to withhold the recognition option until, besides the vacation of other lands, their demand that the city be declared an open city for the adherents of all religions is accepted by Israel.

The recognition of Israel by the Islamic countries being a major issue of interest to the US, there is a strong likelihood of Pakistan being pressurised by the US administration to join those Islamic countries that are ready to grant the much-desired recognition. Needless to say, Pakistan has to handle the issue in accordance with the best interest of its Arab brothers as also its own. And so far as the US factor in the situation is concerned that should not matter to this country for it has no favours to return. In fact, it has been mainly due to the pressure of the Israeli lobby that Washington has singled out this country's nuclear programme for a discriminatory treatment and stopped all military supplies to it. What Pakistan also cannot afford to ignore is that Israel has been actively engaged in helping India in its bloody suppression of the Kashmiri Muslims. Looked from any angle, therefore, there is no reason for Pakistan to oblige Israel and its friends unless the country can show for its good intentions for the future by rolling back its aggression in the Middle East and stopping its support to India in its suppression of the Kashmiri freedom struggle.

Paper Warns Against Recognizing Israel

BK1212134294 Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 11 Dec 94 p 10

[Editorial: "The Islamic Summit: Attempt To Secure the Recognition of Israel and Pakistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is going to the Moroccan city of Casablanca tomorrow where she will attend the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO] summit. The ICO summit is being held at a time when the worst oppression in human history is being carried out in Bosnia and Kashmir. The entire Jewish community, global institutions including the United Nations, and human rights organizations are not only silently watching the genocide against the Muslims, but are patronizing the oppressor nations. The only fault

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of the people of Bosnia and Kashmir is that they are Muslims and are unwilling to live like slaves. Muslims are being mistreated in other parts of the world as well. Even in Islamic countries, Muslims are either engaged themselves in internecine fighting or their rulers, obeying the dictates of the United States, are suppressing the Muslims demanding democratic rights. This is exactly what is happening in Palestine, Afghanistan and Algeria. Given this situation, the ICO summit seems very timely. Reports received so far, however, indicate that the summit will only "consider" its heavy agenda. The maximum it will do is adopt some resolutions and rid itself of responsibilities. The issue of recognizing Israel, however, will be seriously considered, and attempts will be made to create a consensus of Islamic countries on it.

The establishment of Israel and the four and one-half decades of its history prove that the United States and the West are not content to tend the plant they planted. They also seek to force the Arab countries to not only recognize it, but help it overcome its economic and financial difficulties by establishing cordial relations with it. One Arab country after another is recognizing Israel, following the lead of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The problem which Israel could have faced from Hamas has now been thrown on the shoulders of the municipal government of Yasir 'Arafat to manage. Syria is still adamant, but it has no objection to recognizing Israel in exchange for the return of the Golan Heights.

The case of Pakistan is different. First, our policy of not recognizing Israel was not merely intended to please the Arabs. Second, we do not have any other compulsions, nor are we in a position that we have no other option than recognizing Israel. The whole world knows that in the face of the U.S. pressure, the Arab countries are deviating from their principled and honest stand. In view of the "good manners" being displayed by the United States toward us during the past four or five years, we do not need to follow the example of the Arabs and share in any decision which can dent our prestige, dignity, and faith in God, and should not do anything merely to appease the United States or surrender to its pressure.

Prior to her departure for Morocco, the prime minister has had a meeting with P.K. Hoar, the U.S. Central Command chief. Talking to Indian newsmen in New Delhi, Walter Slocombe, U.S. deputy undersecretary of defense for policy, said that the United States does not want to develop its relations with China at the expense of India-U.S. relations. He said that Pakistan will not be given arms. Slocombe also made it clear that it is in the interests of both the United States and India if U.S. defense relations with Beijing deepen. [sentence as published] Economic and defense relations between India and the United States are increasing constantly. The two countries hold joint military exercises and the Indian troops are receiving training from U.S. defense experts. Apart from Slocombe, General Hoar, who recently visited Pakistan, has also said that the United States is unable to supply either conventional or nonconventional weapons to Pakistan.

The United States decided to stop military and economic aid to Pakistan when Benazir Bhutto, along with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and General Aslam Beg, decided to cap the nuclear program. The decision was made to please the United States, but the U.S. reward for the decision was that after two or three months it imposed restrictions on Pakistan. Despite the United States already receiving payment for the F-16 planes, it is refusing to supply them or make restitution.

It is now obvious that whether we recognize Israel or take any other step, we cannot please the United States until we follow the U.S. agenda on the nuclear program and the Kashmir issue, nor will the United States include us among the "most favorite" countries like Egypt and Israel. The United States is not willing to cede any importance to China at the expense of U.S. relations with India, so where does Pakistan stand?

India's ties with Israel are becoming a model of bilateral relations. Reports have come in about the presence of Israeli commandos in Kashmir. Given the situation, we have to keep in mind our own national interests, and without creating an impression of any confrontation with the United States or Israel, devise policies by which can succeed in achieving our objective without allowing ourselves to be affected adversely. If the Arab countries agree to commit mass suicide to appease the United States, then it is not necessary for us to follow their lead and jump into the same hell.

Have we gained anything by the steps we took so far to appease the United States, which might prompt us to think that from now on we will be in a better position? Therefore, it is the duty of Prime Minister Bhutto that while attending the Morocco summit, she should protect Pakistan's interests and not share the decision to recognize Israel as a gesture of following what others are doing or appeasing the United States. Even if the United States does not run the show, then she should not make any hurried decisions and ignore the national interests.

One after another, U.S. leaders are visiting Pakistan and apprising us of their agenda on Israel, the nuclear program, and Kashmir. We should not forget our national agenda either, which is based on independence, sovereignty, prosperity, and an independent and leadership role [qaidana kirdar] in this region. We cannot afford to show any weakness in regard to our national, diplomatic, and security interests until the UN resolutions on Kashmir are implemented, our peaceful nuclear program is accepted, and India is restrained from its aggressive designs. Any government doing so will invite the wrath of the people and will be humiliated by the nation. Therefore, Pakistan's position at the Casablanca conference should by no means be contradictory to the national aspirations.

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Russian Team Arrives To Discuss Defense Sales

SU-27 Purchase Negotiated

BK1112135794 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 11 Dec 94 pp 1,11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Dec 10: A high level Russian defence team flew into Karachi from Moscow Saturday [10 December] afternoon to hold some crucial discussions with defence authorities in Rawalpindi and finalise a possible deal to sell a squadron of SU-27 to PAF [Pakistani Air Force] and a large number of military hardware to Pakistan military, THE MUSLIM learned from its defence sources.

The team which will hold a week-long negotiations with Ministry of Defence authorities and PAF officials will arrive in Rawalpindi Sunday morning. The team comprises senior officials of Russian Defence Ministry, an official said this afternoon.

The official sources, however, were reluctant to give details of the visit and parameters within which the team is likely to hold talks.

Islamabad and Moscow have been engaged in serious negotiations to strike a deal over defence cooperation for quite some time. It is believed that during the current round of negotiations, the two sides will decide the future of defence cooperation between the two countries.

Official sources claimed that the dates for Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's official visit to Moscow will be finalised after the visit of the Russian defence team. Though the officials in Islamabad are tight-lipped about the negotiations between the two sides, informed defence sources say that Pakistan will mainly be negotiating the purchase of Sukhol SU-27 Flanker from Russia. Conceived as a very long-range interceptor, the SU-27 also possesses superior air combat qualities than other types of air-to-air engagements in particular close range dogfight as well as medium long range combats making it an excellent choice for long-range escort of strike and bomber aircraft over enemy areas, in a broader sense, the SU-27 represents the ideal instrument to project airpower over a large geographical area, through the implementation of the offensive air superiority doctrine. [sentence as published] Although capable of carrying a large quantity of air-to-ground unsophisticated weaponry up to about 8,000 kg the basic version of the Flanker is clearly optimised for air-to-air missions. If Pakistan is able to acquire SU-27 from Russia, then it will be the second country in the South Asia to have it after China which apparently selected the aircraft to project air power over the South China Sea, including the contested Spratly islands, which SU-27 can cover departing from the Hainan base.

According to our defence sources, though Pakistan will be holding serious discussions with the visiting Russian team over the purchase of SU-27, it has not given up the other options. They claimed that President Farooq Leghari during his recent visit to China took up the issue of F-7 Super-7s with Chinese authorities. If Pakistan does not get its F16s from USA and a deal is not finalised with Russia during the current talks, it is expected that up-engined Super-7s, a logical follow-on to current F-7s, will be selected by Pakistan. The Super-7s are to be up-graded with Italian Fiar Griffo radar. Defence sources say in addition to this, Pakistan will also upgrade its Mirage-IIIs and Mirage-Vs. Two prototypes will be evaluated before a full upgrade is considered.

Commenting on the envisaged outcome of the current talks with Russia, the defence sources said that Russia has been reluctant to open direct talks with Pakistan over the sale of SU-27 due to various political and security compulsions but the very presence of a high-powered defence delegation from Moscow speaks for itself what could be the possible outcome of the visit.

The visit by the Russian team comes in the wake of earlier reports from Moscow saying that there is no question of Moscow establishing military technical cooperation with Islamabad. A senior official of the Russian Foreign Ministry while commenting on reports of military technical cooperation between the two countries denied having knowledge of any major weapons system sales. However he had confirmed that a team of Russia's Arms Export Agency was scheduled to visit Pakistan to discuss some questions of military technical cooperation. He had nevertheless indicated that the talks could concern limited cooperation. He added that Russia would not undertake any steps that would upset the balance of forces in South Asia.

While confirming the arrival of two defence teams from Moscow, official sources were, however, very optimistic about striking a deal with Russia over the purchase of conventional defence systems during forthcoming talks.

According to official sources, the major impediment between the two countries was not political but financial in actual terms. they said that while Islamabad wants rouble to be fixed at the exchange rates Russia has offered to India for defence sales, Moscow insists on fixing new rates of its currency with Pakistan. Russia's contention has been that since it has massive defence sales agreement with India it has to give special exchange rates to India. but it cannot treat Pakistan at par since it is likely to go for limited defence purchase. According to official sources, the post-cold war Russian regime after briefly flirting with the possibility of putting its huge military industrial complex to civilian use, is now using arms to earn the much-needed foreign exchange for re-vitalising its economy. In other words, they said, Russia is no longer in the business of subsidising bilateral relations for merely ideological reasons. Indeed it is keen on allies which can help it make difficult transitions to a successful market economy, they added.

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Russia Offers To Sell Submarine, Arms

BK1312122294 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 13 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 12—In a major development, Russia has offered to Pakistan 'Kilo' class diesel-electric patrol submarine, three types of AFVs [armored fighting vehicles], APCs [armored personnel carriers], MBTs [main battle tanks], MI-7 helicopter, MI-7 ASW (anti-submarine warfare) and OSA class missile boats for sale. Besides, it also offered 90 MiG-29s and two squadrons of Su-27 for sale during the current crucial round of talks between the defence authorities, THE MUSLIM learnt from reliable defence sources Monday [12 December] afternoon.

The talks are under progress between a high-level defence team from Moscow and officials of Joint Staff [JS] Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The Russian delegation is led by Vice Admiral Krasonov G N who is also the Vice President of the Russian arms manufacturing firm. Other members include Academician Kulakov A V, Member of the Export Council to the Government of Russian Federation, Zakharov M A, Vice President of the Machine Building and Special Metallurgy Company, Meckulov V I, General Director of Aircraft (Su-27) Building Factory in Komsomoluk-on-Amur, Col Tlmomenko V M, Deputy Head of Department of the State company Ros Vooruzhenly, Zhurayzey S V, senior strategic policy adviser of Russian arms.

According to our sources, the visiting delegation held series of talks with senior officials of JS Headquarters and PAF [Pakistan Air Force] Operations and Plans on Monday and negotiations are expected to continue for another five days. According to these sources Russia has offered a wide range of weaponry to Pakistan.

With the reports that India, the conventional enemy of Pakistan in the region, is flexing its muscles to induct 12 more warships in its Navy, Pakistan is also constrained to enhance its naval strength. Russia offers its Kilo class submarines which it has recently sold to China for US $240 [figure as published] per copy. Russia has some 22 kilo class petrol submarines with conventional propulsion to dispose of due to restructuring of its submarine fleet. Pakistan is also negotiating with the visiting team the procurement of three missile boats for its Navy for offshore patrolling and combat purposes. With large coastal areas to cover and to protect its Exclusive Economic Zone and most importantly with the dispute of Sircreek still pending with India Pakistan badly seeds a few offshore patrolling vessels. Pakistan Navy will be looking forward from Russia to acquire missile boats, MI-7 with ASW and at least six aircraft also with ASW (anti-submarine warfare).

According to our sources Russia has also offered three different types of armoured fighting vehicles (AFVs) and APCs and MBTs for Pakistan military. Russia has 5,000 T-80s and 9,000 T-72s in its inventory and since it plans to cut its army to about 2.1 million by the end of current year it will certainly dispose of its arms in the same ratio.

Well informed defence sources disclosed that Russia has now formally offered to sell 2 squadrons of Su-27 including 8 trainers with the price tag of about US $29.5 million per copy with complete support and training facilities. Russia has also offered 90 MiG-20s with at least 10 trainers. MiG-29 FULCRUM is a superb air superiority fighter for close combat and medium range engagements, due to its multi-spectral fire control system and a varied, flexible air-to-air missile armament centered on the AA-11 ARCHER short range IR-seeking missile and the several variants of the AA-10 ALAMO medium-and long-range missiles.

However, the MiG-29 lacks sophisticated air-to-surface weaponry. The second shortcoming of the aircraft is the short range of the fighter which was originally designed as a local battlefield air superiority fighter. This notwithstanding, MiG-29 cost effectively fulfill the air defence role over important areas of the country with a useful secondary role for the air-to-surface missions.

Kyrgyz President Visits; 6 Agreements Signed

BK1212044094 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 11 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan signed six agreements today aimed at promoting bilateral cooperation in economic, commercial, political, and other fields of interest. The signing ceremony was held at the prime minister's house and was attended by visiting Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto besides federal ministers and members of the Kyrgyz delegation.

President Akayev and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto signed a joint declaration on principles and directions of cooperation between Islamabad and Bishkek. Under the agreement, Islamabad and Bishkek will develop cooperation in political, economic, trade, scientific, technological, industrial, transport, cultural, and other fields, as there exists a broad identity of views on important international political and economic issues. The two brotherly counties would treat each other on the basis of equality and mutual benefit as most favored nation.

The two countries will also cooperate in their fight against crime in general and particularly against terrorism, taking of hostages, crimes against civil aviation security, and illegal international trade of narcotics. They also undertook to oppose all forms of religious intolerance, fundamentalism, hatred, and violence. The parties to the agreement expressed their commitment to achieving a nuclear weapon-free and nonviolent world and were convinced that the greater friendship between the two countries would contribute to the cause of international peace and security, particularly in Asia.

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The commerce minister, Chaudhary Ahmad Mukhtar, and Kyrgyz Finance Minister K. Nanayev initialed the agreement on establishment of joint ministerial commissions and cooperation between the two countries in economic and commercial fields. The commerce minister also signed an agreement pertaining to regulation of motor transportation between the two countries. The Kyrgyz transport minister, S. Aldesov, signed the documents on behalf of his government.

The agreement relating to cooperation between the two countries in the field of tourism was signed by Kyrgyz Tourism and Sports Minister [title as heard] (Kaparov) and Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh. Besides, the Kyrgyz deputy foreign minister, (Jekshan Kulavov), also initialed protocol of cooperation between the Foreign Offices of the two countries.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the visit of President Askar Akayev marks the landmark in relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan, which are deep rooted in common history, culture, and regional proximity. She was addressing a luncheon ceremony in Islamabad she hosted in honor of the visiting Kyrgyzstan president. She said: The artificial barriers have now gone; we must make efforts to make up for the lost time. Efforts are required in the fields of trade, economic cooperation, and communication to once again see this region a strong and powerful part of the world. The prime minister referred to Pakistan's efforts for peace in the region. She said the success of the Afghan jihad is conditional to the success of reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan. The efforts of a decade will go in vain if we fail in our bid to bring about peace. Referring to Kashmir, the prime minister said continued violations of human rights by India in the valley pose a great threat to peace in the region.

In his speech, the Kyrgyzstan president said his present visit will open up a new era of cooperation in the fields of trade, communications, and tourism, which will be to the great benefit of our two peoples. Mr. Askar appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace in Afghanistan and Kazakhstan and hoped that these efforts would succeed and the peoples of the region will see a new era of prosperity, well-being, and good neighborly relations. He said by showing courage and commitment, Pakistan and India can resolve the Kashmir problem.

'Wave' of Afghan Students in NWFP Viewed

BK1212065094 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 12 Dec 94 p 7

[Editorial: "Talibaan [students] Factor"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The departure of several hundred Afghan talibaan [students] studying in madrassahs [mosque schools] in the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] for Afghanistan to reinforce their colleagues, who have reportedly captured some provinces, is most disquieting. It provides unnecessary substance to Kabul's charges of Pakistan's interference in its internal affairs, as the movement of the students places Peshawar in a questionable position. With the government still unable to prevent some of the mojahedin-turned warlords from misusing its territory, the appearance of the talibaan factor tends to make Pakistan once again the open house that it was earlier during the "jihad" days, for all kinds of dubious elements. The nation is still paying a heavy price for an act that made a shambles of our own internal security.

It cannot be expected that this new wave of trained and equipped religious students will be without residual damage to Pakistan. As it is, the use of the madrassahs in Pakistan as military academies to prepare foreign fighters adhering to some particular persuasion, is most regrettable, it will have an even worse effect in Pakistan. It is now quite likely that these institutions, which are meant to initiate students in the pristine teachings of Islam, will become centre for our myriad religious organisations to militarily prepare their cadres for purposes that will be far removed from religious obligations. The NWFP government could not have possibly been oblivious of what sort of training these madrassahs were imparting to the highly impressionable youth, not all of them Afghan. That no action was taken on this score is surprising, as the authorities do have an interest in such matters, providing some of them with zakat [charitable] funds.

While the Frontier government must now tidy up the situation and ensure that the madrassahs serve the purpose these are meant for, the federal government should deal with the problem at the international level. The Afghans, whether refugees or leaders, must be made to realise that Pakistan's duty as a sympathiser of their cause, whatever it was, ended years ago. Its hospitality and territory cannot any more be misused with the same abandon as in the past. The Afghan organisations to which these talibaan belong should be asked to explain their role vis-a-vis the training of their militant activists on Pakistani soil.

Regardless of the religious instructions imparted, training of foreigners in the art of war on Pakistan's soil does involve more than an aberration of an educational institution's rules. It strikes against the authority of the state and unnecessarily drags it into the internal squabbles of a neighbouring country. Islamabad needs to explain this development as it comes at a time when every effort is being made to maintain good relations with Kabul. Despatching trained and armed soldiers from here to participate in their bloody civil war is not going to help us.

Editorial Views Results of Indian Elections

BK1312124594 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN OBSERVER in English 13 Dec 94 p 4

[Editorial: "Rao's Party Routed"]

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[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the recent provincial polls in India, the ruling Congress (I) Party of Narasimha Rao suffered serious setbacks in several states including the home province of the Premier, Andhra Pradesh. It is remarkable that Mr Rao put the prestige of his office on the line by personally leading the campaign in his native state, but that did not work either and the populist regional party of a former movie actor Rama Rao (no relation to the Prime Minister) is poised to win the polls hands down.

The Telugu Desam Party of lesser Rao had campaigned on a pledge to give cheap rice to the poor and other anti-reformist programmes that proved potent vote-getters in these elections. In neighbouring Karnataka, the Janata Dal was swept back to power eliminating a bitterly divided Congress Party, relegating it to the humiliating third position. In this state, the revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party has emerged as the main opposition party. In Sikkim in the far east, the Congress has so far won only one district and seemed set to lose heavily.

One should not assume that the fall of Rao government is imminent after the reversals. Indian electorate is fairly mature politically. Often in the past the voters supported regional groups in the state elections but at the time of national polls they voted for the federal Party dominant at the Centre. In this way they expressed their determination to maintain the unity of the country sending at the same time signals to the Centre that its response to regional concerns is unsatisfactory. Looking at the results in this perspective, one does not see immediate danger to Rao's rule, and it may not necessarily mean that Congress will lose next national elections. Having said that, the causes that led to the defeat of the ruling party must give cause for concern to Mr Rao and his party. The possibility of an internal challenge to his leadership from the provincial party bosses cannot be ruled out, if they feel that their association with the Rao liberalisation programme is going to cost them their power base.

The elections have taken place at a very crucial stage in the history of that country. The ruling party has embarked on an ambitious programme of economic reforms designed to expose the economy to free market forces. That may appear a very sensible approach on paper but in a country of widespread poverty without a social security net, the effect of these reforms on the price of essential goods must be taken into account and measures to cushion the impact should be taken without fail. Economics must not be divorced from human suffering. There is real danger that the rising prices of staple foods may cause the rout of Congress (I) even at the next elections.

Second, we have seen the rise of communalism in Karnataka where BJP has become the second largest party. The forces of tolerance, reason and secularism have been losing out heavily to the forces of hate and barbarism, thanks to the spineless policies and series of craven capitulations by Rao government. These setbacks should persuade the ruling party to reconsider its policies on communalism and economic reforms.

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